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HILO-SOCRATES.

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PART IV.—Among the Teachers.

BY WILLIAM ELLIS,

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ETC. ETC.

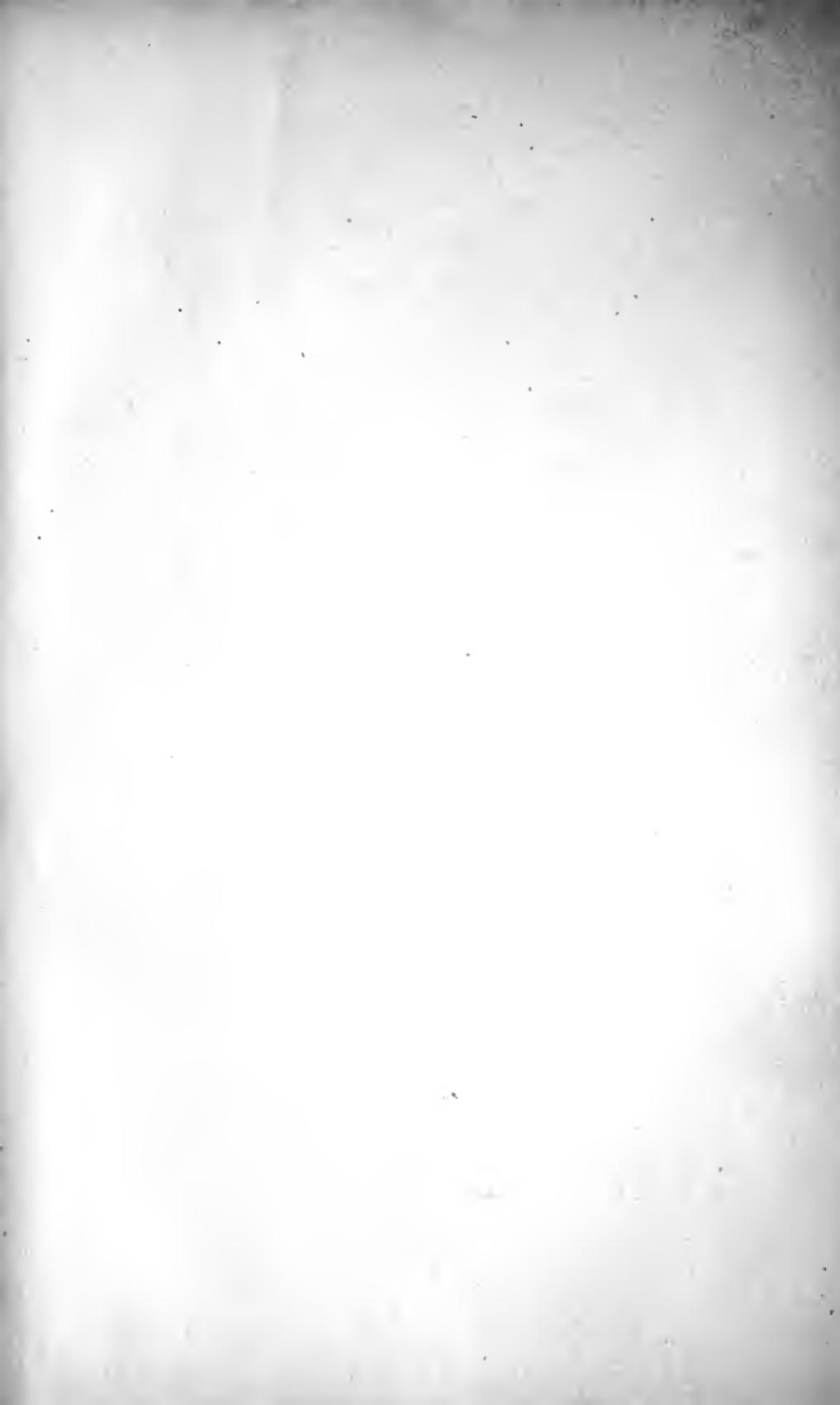
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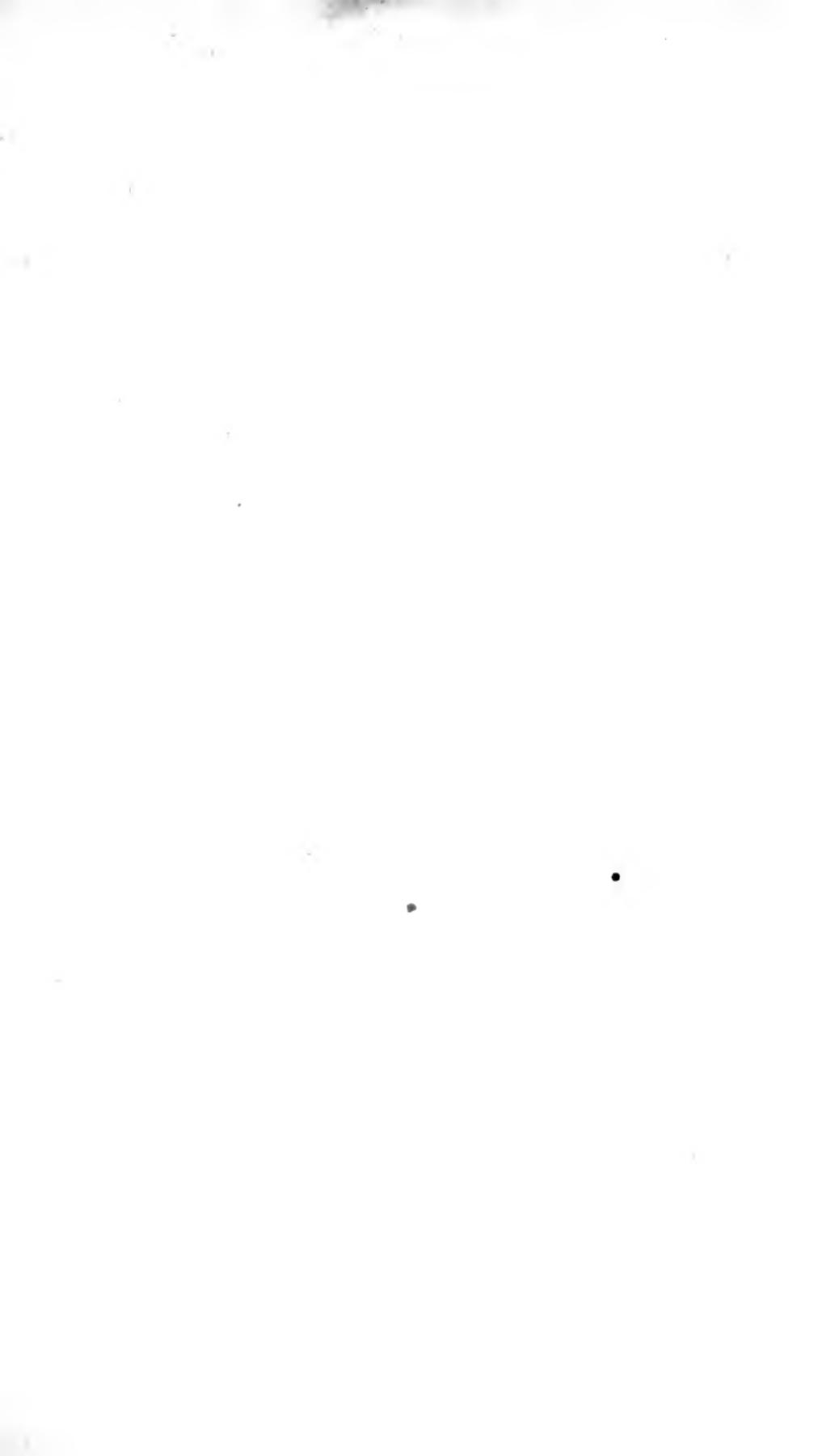
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PHILO-SOCRATES.

AMONG THE TEACHERS.

ON TRUTHFULNESS.

T. AFTER pondering over the various questions which we have had the advantage of discussing with you, we cannot say that we find ourselves in a satisfactory state. You have rather shaken some of our old opinions and convictions, than supplied us with better.

P. Do you mean that I have shaken any convictions which you still wish to hold by?

T. No: for we feel that we have only abandoned what we cannot but admit to be erroneous, false, hurtful, and sinful. But we would rather be assisted to convictions fit to be accepted or held by, than be driven to surrender such as we had.

P. I fear you made a mistake in applying to me. I am not in the habit of supplying convictions. The utmost that I venture to attempt is to assist those who apply to me to form convictions for themselves. You know my method of assisting

children. They, unless their understandings have been ill-used, have no errors to surrender. They have only to be gradually led to perceive the distinctions between true and false and between right and wrong, and to accept the former. But you, in common with most adults, find that you have strayed or been seduced out of the road leading to the destination that you were wishing to reach. And do you really think that the stranger whom you meet, or who warns you of the wrong turn that you had taken, ought to be thought or spoken of as one who shakes your convictions? Is he not doing the very thing that is required to set you right?

T. You must excuse us, but we cannot help feeling disturbed.

P. Would you not also feel disturbed if you were awakened out of your beds by an alarm of fire, or if suddenly warned of any other danger that you had not suspected? But would you not also feel grateful to the party who by his caution enabled you to escape destruction?

T. We will be plain with you. You are making us feel as if we should be led on to disbelieve in Christianity.

P. Strange apprehension! An earnest, a cautious, I might even say a suspicious, search for truth may lead to your turning your back upon what you believe to be the grandest of truths! May not this apprehension originate in your beginning to perceive that many absurd and untenable doctrines have been accepted, and many bad acts and practices countenanced by you under the mistaken notion that they were conformable to Christianity? Ought you not to rejoice at the prospect of obtaining a deliverance from such dangerous delusions, and thus being left with "Religion, pure and undefiled"?

T. You must bear with us. But our deliverance, as you term it, seems to proceed at such a rate that our friends tell us we shall soon have no belief left to be delivered of.

P. I should have thought that you would reserve for your own judgment, and not submit to the judgment of your friends, how far the severance of truth from falsehood, of religion from

superstition, was liable to banish the former from your thoughts, or to wean them from your affections.

T. Neither will we submit to their judgments. Nevertheless, we feel the severity of the ordeal to which we are subjected, while we return to seek the continuance of your assistance, through which we hope to be left with religious convictions beyond the reach of doubt or cavil.

P. You can only arrive at this state of certainty and security by submitting all your opinions and convictions to the severest examination—an examination which shall at least establish beyond a doubt their mutual coherence, and that they are free from an internecine propensity to contradict and destroy one another. Too many people wince at the thought of the havoc which may be made by such an examination among opinions long cherished as sacred.

T. We wish we could say with truth that we do not wince. But we are resolved to face what we feel it would be cowardly, foolish, and irreligious to shirk..

P. While I applaud your resolution, I sympathize with your anxieties. As that around which our affections have once clung cannot be abandoned without a pang, is it surprising that reluctance should be felt to enter upon an investigation that may lead to such a result ? The merchant who fears that his estate, if wound up, might not suffice to pay all his creditors—or the parent who suspects that the son upon whom he had set his fondest hopes may be guilty of some criminal or disgraceful act, can he but shrink from an investigation which is to remove or to confirm his suspicions ? I readily assume that your attachment to your religion is as strong as that of a merchant for his honour, and of a father for his child.

T. We trust that it is. Religion is the anchor by which we hold to all that we enjoy in this world and hope for in the next.

P. Your simile suggests a question : Are you aware of the precautions which are taken by careful ship-owners before they receive anchors and chains on board their ships ?

T. A strain is put upon them much beyond any that they will have to withstand in actual service.

P. Ought you to do less with the religious opinions on which you have to rely for the security of all that you hold most dear, than a ship-owner does with his anchors and chains? He would grieve to see them snap at the trial, but he runs the risk in order that he may be relieved from all fear of their parting at sea.

T. We do not see very clearly how religious opinions are to be tested, as anchors and cables are, previous to starting on the voyage of life. A strain upon them at all analogous to that from the dangers and temptations amid which they will have to struggle neither can be, nor ought to be, attempted in the nursery and school-room.

P. We need not add to the difficulty of the very trying investigation which we have before us by mixing it up with another. The test applied to anchors and chains proves their soundness, not the care and ability with which they are to be used. The truth of a religion is one thing; the fulness with which it has been imbibed, so as to secure conduct in conformity with its behests, is another. It is with the first alone that we have to deal at present. You may as well bear in mind, however, that the perfection arrived at in the second, if the religion were false, might be an aggravation of all the dreadful evils to which a false religion can give rise. The burning of widows on the funeral piles of their deceased husbands, and the wholesale slaughter of heretics and infidels, are but fruits of a scrupulous obedience to the injunctions of false religion, or, which is almost worse, of a good religion badly interpreted.

T. It is a sad reflection, blessed as we are in this part of the world by being saved from false religions, that we should have cursed ourselves with false interpretations of the true one vouchsafed to us.

P. And so applied those false interpretations as to have raised a doubt whether any atrocities committed by the

heathens have not been more than equalled under the banners of the Cross. Our efforts to distinguish between true and false interpretations of true religion may be facilitated by a preliminary consideration of the evidences or signs which have led you to the choice of the religion in which you rejoice. Passing over the Pagan superstitions, the two best known compilations which have disputed the hold upon the minds of men with the Bible, are the Koran and the Vedas—each of which claims a larger number, if a less intelligent class, of votaries than the Bible. Did you ever read these two celebrated expositions of religious doctrine which have gathered round them such hosts of believers ?

T. No ; and in fact they have never come in our way.

P. Nevertheless, you have no hesitation in rejecting them, unread, as false ?

T. How could we do otherwise, believing in the Bible ?

P. Which would be doing greater justice to the Bible, think you, its acceptance after a careful examination of the Vedas and the Koran, or its acceptance regardless of that which in those works has gained and retained so firm a hold over millions of mankind ?

T. Your question is plausible ; but it leaves unnoticed another alternative which is presented to us. We are entitled to ask for a brief summary or abstract of the doctrines contained in those works, supposing we have had no opportunity of observing what they are as exemplified in the conduct and ceremonials of the people who profess to believe in them, before we undertake the labour of examining them minutely. And if we learn from the mouths, and observe by the conduct of all who are reputed to be well-informed, well-conducted, pious, and saintly—not infidels and scoffers—enough to convince us that the rules of life enjoined by their religion are a mass of frivolities, enormities, and contradictions, with just so much of good in them as will enable society to exist, surely we may economize our time and powers, so as to apply them to better purpose in some other direction.

P. And will not the believers in the Vedas and the Koran act in the same spirit with the Bible, smiling with complacency, if they do not look with scorn and disgust, at what they consider to be contradictions and enormities in the several parts of the creed which you proclaim, and the still greater contradictions between your precepts and your conduct?

T. They will; and there can be little doubt that the conduct of so-called Christians in countries inhabited by believers in the Vedas and Koran has assisted greatly to confirm them in all their superstitions.

P. And this same conduct, in combination with the prodigious varieties of conduct, many of them inconsistent one with the other, drawn from one and the same form of words, ought to stir us up to the determination to winnow from our religion all those absurdities, contradictions, and deformities which have been suffered to disfigure it and to inflict such dreadful evils upon mankind.

T. We would gladly learn how this process of winnowing is to be conducted. More than once in the history of the world an attempt at winnowing has produced, not a gentle breeze sufficient to blow off the chaff, but a hurricane which has threatened to sweep away wheat and chaff together.

P. Showing how far safer it is to prevent the growth of superstition than to separate it from religion after they have had time to entwine themselves with the affections into one strong cord wherewith to tie down intelligence and all aspirations for improvement.

T. Unfortunately, we are no longer children; and on that account we have less time to learn, while we may have much to unlearn. But we hope that you will not abandon us in order to return to your favourite pupils—the children.

P. Do not fear. To abandon you, would be to abandon the children. Besides, you have an advantage over most adults. You are familiar with children. You can enter into my feelings when I recommend learners to make themselves “like unto little children” in all things save their weakness in power

of application and vigour of intellect. Let us, having brought ourselves into this state of mind, imagine that three revelations, or pretended revelations, of the Divine will are presented to us. At a glance, or after a slight intimation of their contents from the favourers of each, we see that the acceptance of one must mean the rejection of the other two. Can you fix upon any one test that would be more likely than any other to assist you to a right choice ?

T. We don't know of any better test than the kind of conduct of man to man that was sanctioned, upheld or forbidden, as from Divine authority, in each.

P. Would you entirely overlook, so far as you could observe it, the conduct, or rather the demeanour of man to God ?

T. That question implies an inference from our last answer, which is hardly fair. You did not ask us to enumerate all the tests, but to name the best test for judging which of three revelations, or pretended revelations, was the true one : it being felt that two out of three must be spurious or false. Confined to one test, we repeat that the best, so far as we can judge, is the conduct of man to man enjoined in each. There are insuperable difficulties in the way of judging the conduct or demeanour of man to his Maker, independently of his conduct to his fellow-man. A man's demeanour to his fellow-man may afford some criterion of his demeanour towards God. Whereas, experience shows that his demeanour, or more properly his averments and manifestations, towards God would be a very deceptive indication of his probable demeanour towards his fellow-man, and hence of his appreciation of the Divine attributes.

P. Would you judge of the attributes of the Deity, supposed to be set forth in these revelations, by the conduct enjoined upon man towards his fellow-men, rather than by the epithets of laudation lavished upon the Deity ?

T. These epithets would have little weight with us. Among Eastern nations it is found that manifestations of subserviency and expressions of deference are seldom measured by the good

qualities of the despot on whom they are directed. More frequently the notes of adulation swell louder and louder as faith in the despot's goodness becomes fainter and fainter. As the despot sinks lower and lower in general estimation, his praise rises higher and higher ; and the feelings of terror which he inspires are expressed in words of love. It is impossible for an intelligent man to address God, "the perfection of goodness and wisdom," as if he were an Eastern despot. The poor creature whose worship takes that form strives to conciliate a monster where he should adore a benefactor.

P. You have told me very plainly how you would not judge. I am now anxious to learn how you would.

T. Setting aside other expressions, if we saw that the injunctions of conduct in one revelation breathed a spirit of love to man, sympathy with his weaknesses, a desire for his enlightenment and elevation, and gave encouragement to his exertions, promising support in his moments of despondency, and cheering him with hopes of a lasting reward for his efforts to improve himself and his fellow-men, and for his vigilance in avoiding any act that might inflict evil upon them ; while in the others, the line of conduct enjoined upon mankind was unintelligible, contradictory, frivolous, inhuman, impracticable, and when practicable leading inevitably to human misery, intermingled with a recognition of the most absurd fables and most degrading superstitions, and countenancing fallacious explanations of phenomena which have since been dissipated by the light of progressively advancing sciences ; we should not hesitate to accept the first and to reject its competitors.

P. Having accepted it, in common with a host of co-religionists, would your difficulties in deducing rules of life, or in obtaining a sanction for rules of life, deduced by other means or from other sources, be at an end ?

T. Far from it. We might even think that the continuance of this difficulty was destined to be one of the means by which the whetting of our inquisitiveness, the exercising of our judg-

ment, and the elevating of our sentiments, might be kept up for our progressive improvement to the end of time.

P. I suppose it must be admitted that we are a long way from finding a concurrence of opinion, not to say unanimity of judgment, among the various Christian Churches as to whether rules of life were ever intended to be given in the Scriptures or are to be found there, or if in them, what they are. Whose guidance ought you to trust to in forming your own judgment on this difficult matter of interpretation ?

T. We ought to trust to no judgment but our own, while gratefully accepting any assistance and seeking for any light that may help us to judge aright.

P. And in your turn ought you to render any assistance to others ?

T. We conceive that to be our special duty—the spirit, if not the substance of it. If we can succeed in forming the understandings of our pupils, we shall be doing as much as they can expect from us towards qualifying them for good self-guidance as well as for a wise selection of their religion. For one may consider religion as a matter of choice when once it is held to be a duty with everybody to examine the grounds of the religion which he has been led to profess, whether by enlightening or blinding, awakening or lulling his intellectual faculties.

P. Let the intellectual faculties be ever so well cultivated, do you not consider that the judgment will still be liable to err in the choice of a religion or in the method of interpreting it ?

T. We must leave this question to be answered by more sagacious men. We hope that, with better teaching and training, unanimity may be arrived at in matters of religion. At present, we can but contemplate with wonder the varieties of construction put upon the same collection of writings, and with pain the acrimony which each church or sect exhibits in defending its own and in assailing its neighbours' conflicting interpretations.

P. Do you teach religion, then, in the expectation that your pupils will help to swell the host of Christians at issue with one another in their interpretations, and little inclined to mutual toleration?

T. We hope for something better, although with our imperfect skill, and the present condition of society, we can hardly expect that our pupils will altogether escape in the midst of the prevailing epidemic of wrangling and intolerance.

P. Supposing you to concur in my views of the inexpediency of attempting to introduce Bible lessons into your schools, your lessons in religion, or more properly, your preparations for them, will be to lead your pupils, throughout the whole course of their instruction, to distinguish the true from the false, the good from the bad, with the conviction that an earnest desire to seek and act up to the good and the true, and to shun the bad and the false, can never be opposed to any religion, or interpretation of religion that ought to be held to. Do you not share in the fears of those who think that education so conducted will end in want of faith or in every variety of wild form and fancy under the name of religion?

T. So far from sharing in those fears, one of our expectations is that many of the wild forms and fancies that have sprung up under the shadow of Christianity will disappear. But should we be mistaken, what a benefit will be secured for mankind by sending forth the young from our schools inspired with a love of truth, with truthfulness of disposition, and with a determination to reject every so-called religion which represented God, directly or indirectly, openly or covertly, explicitly or implicitly, as countenancing or abetting any conduct of man to man that tended to produce human misery!

P. Are you still troubled with some misgivings whether your method of conducting religious education may not lead away from that unanimity, which, if despaired of, is still longed for, and which seems to reward our efforts and to confirm us in the wisdom of our course in every other branch of instruction? Are there any grounds for suspecting that you may be mistaken?

We may throw some light upon this question by inquiring into the results of the better methods of teaching some of the many other subjects which it is thought desirable should be known by a portion, if not by the whole of society. Do our best teachers of chemistry, of mechanics, of astronomy, or of navigation, attempt to tie down their pupils at the very beginning of their course to the conclusions which they are to adopt at its close?

T. Their course is the very opposite. They desire that their pupils should take nothing for granted, accept nothing unproved.

P. And what is found to be the result of this recommendation to the young, not to yield their assent, either in thought or word, till conviction had been sought and found by observation, experiment, and reflection? Is it a Babel of conflicting opinions, or a collection of well-digested and coherent knowledge upon which, up to a certain point, there is not to be found a difference of opinion?

T. Perfect unanimity up to a certain point. Beyond that point, the boundary of knowledge as far as it has been pushed, the differences and doubts, and the controversies to which they give rise, are confined to the new discoveries which it is thought may be safely added to the vast mass of knowledge previously collected and systematized.

P. Has the application of this continually increasing mass of knowledge to the purposes of life, in agriculture, in manufactures, in locomotion, and in domestic arrangements, tended to confirm or to shake the evidence upon which this unanimity has been arrived at?

T. To confirm it. There can be no doubt that the field of knowledge over which unanimity prevails is extending day by day.

P. With an accumulation of knowledge so much beyond what was possessed by our forefathers, whereon to exercise our thoughts, does it seem as if we had any reason to fear the consequences of allowing the freest play to the inquiring, observing, experimenting, and reasoning faculties of the young, aided by such lights and suggestions as the best instructed adults in

every department of knowledge, actually disciplined for the purpose of teaching, can afford them ?

T. Rather, we have every reason to be most hopeful that by allowing to the young the freest exercise of all their faculties, we shall witness the progressively increasing extent of our knowledge, and also a progressively increasing unanimity in the acceptance, at least, of all that knowledge which is included under the name of physical science.

P. I thought you would hesitate to speak as confidently of the knowledge which is included under the name of moral or social science—the science of the conduct of man to man.

T. We should scarcely be warranted in doing that. We speak according to our limited experience ; and till people in general have acknowledged that there is such a science, and have introduced the teaching of it in their schools, we can only venture to say, we have no reason to doubt that, when instruction in social science is conducted on the same plan as instruction in the physical sciences, there will be the same inevitable gravitating towards true conclusions and unanimity in their acceptance.

P. What is there at this time to hold back the spread of social science more than that of the physical sciences ?

T. If we are not mistaken, the continued disregard or neglect of it is to be accounted for by the tenacity with which superstition and prejudice have always been observed to maintain their hold. A reluctance to adopt, if not a readiness to resist whatever threatens to disturb inveterate habits, will strengthen the tyranny of superstitions and prejudices of long standing. These formidable opponents to improvements in knowledge and conduct have not combated in former times, nor are they combating now, in their own names. They assume the garb of religion. They resemble the barbarous leaders of a barbarous soldiery, who deaden the little intelligence and humanity which might induce hesitation in committing acts of atrocity, by urging them to stand up for their “holy religion,” while liquor is dealt out freely to infuriate them.

P. Do you despair of seeing superstition and prejudice compelled to relax their hold, and religion elevated in their place to assist and to urge forward instruction in the "science of conduct"?

T. The history of the progress of physical science forbids despair. We need not repeat the oft-told tale. Step after step, victory after victory, up to this time, has been gained against superstition and prejudice, despite their activity in attracting recruits to their ranks by claiming to be religious. We have a succession of hard fought battles to look back upon, victories to rejoice in, fruits to enjoy. The same enemies of mankind, in the same disguise, are still doing their worst; but there are evident symptoms that the end of their reign is approaching. They have affirmed that there is no such science as social science, that there is no necessity for it; that the revealed will of God, as interpreted through their medium, suffices for man's guidance, and that to think otherwise is the height of presumption and wickedness, to be visited with condign punishment in the next world, if it escape in this. The fears, affections, and imaginations of mankind have all combined to give efficacy to the threats of Divine vengeance represented as ready to be inflicted upon misbelief, doubt or unbelief upon matters beyond human ken, or the depths of which science had not been able to fathom. But the repeated assaults of the astronomer, the chemist, and the electrician, have proved too strong for superstition and prejudice to resist.

P. You cannot point, like teachers of physical science, to results extending over many years in proof of the certainty with which conclusions anticipated by the teacher of social science will be accepted by the learner. Your position as teachers of that science resembles that of Benjamin Franklin, when he earned his testimonial of "Eripuit cœlo fulmen," or of George Stephenson, who felt when he exhibited the "Rocket," between Liverpool and Manchester, that locomotives and the rail would supersede fast coaches and the common road wherever speed and economy were sought for. Like them,

you must be prepared to find few willing to trust to your judgment, and fewer still capable of judging for themselves.

T. And, like the early followers of former inventors, originators, and promulgators of new truths, we must be inspired with determination and energy to execute the task assigned to us. Our faith in the goodness of our cause and the importance of our mission is not to be weakened because the prejudices and inertness of our generation either oppose or decline to assist us.

P. As a compensation for the disadvantage at which you are as compared with teachers of physical science, may you not take higher ground than they can with the so-called religious world?

T. We may. We proclaim that the knowledge which we are striving to impart in our schools is an essential part of religion; that religion without it is a superstition, or, worse than superstition, a sham; for superstition has at least one merit—one claim to respectability—it is sincere, and that cannot be said for a sham.

P. Are you not reversing the order in which religion and education are commonly presented to the public by many who are looked up to as authorities? Do they not say that education must be based upon the Bible?

T. We dare say that the worthy folks who repeat this hackneyed phrase intend to convey some meaning, and some intimation of their wishes, as to what they are willing to co-operate to bring about, and what they would work hard to prevent. Let us try to give intelligent expression to their thoughts, and if possible to agree with them, or to ascertain, if we cannot, where we differ. We will suppose it to be their conviction that education ought to be considered principally as a means of reading and understanding the Bible. Although we would not confine our views of education within those limits, we are not precluded from concurring in the thought so far as we can understand it, and in acting upon it. But must not children learn to read, before they can read the Bible? Must they not have acquired some slight knowledge of physical science before they can reconcile modern discoveries with Scripture narrative?

Must they not have learned how to distinguish between good and bad in human conduct, before they can study with benefit, or even without damage, records teeming with evidences of the cruelties, the perfidies, the debaucheries, and the superstitions of ages of barbarism ? Surely pupils keenly sensitive to the distinction between right and wrong, good and bad, are more capable than others of judging how and in what sense God, the fountain of all goodness, can be said to have approved, sanctioned, and enjoined acts and conduct which the pen of a decent writer can do no more than allude to, and which the religious parent would defer, if not avoid altogether, presenting to his children.

P. I do not see how a religious use can be made of the Bible in schools. Mature minds alone are competent to master its contents. None but immature minds congregate in schools. The utmost that can be done for them there before they take their departure is so to prepare, and bud, or graft them, as that they may give promise of bursting into a happy maturity. Most people will admit that the minds of children are too immature to be capable of understanding what are classed among the higher branches of knowledge, upon which all who study them are found to come to a common agreement. Nevertheless, few will be found to assent to our deduction from this acknowledged immaturity, that it is inexpedient and irreligious to thrust upon children "the Book," replete though it be with sublimities, to the height of which the greatest minds can hardly soar; with ambiguities which the acutest intellects can rarely clear up; with apparent contradictions not easy to explain; and with records of acts and sentiments difficult to reconcile with an unfaltering faith in the goodness and wisdom of God. Our interest lies, however, rather with what we would introduce and keep in our schools, for the purpose of rearing up intelligent and well-conducted men, than with what we would exclude; and we will examine the ground already gone over to make sure that nothing has been omitted which is requisite for producing that state of understanding and that

tone of feeling on which hopes of the religious character may reasonably rest.

T. We look forward confidently to the time—and not a very distant time—when many of those who are insisting upon the use, or, as you consider, and we are beginning to consider it, the misuse of the Bible, as a school-book, will also insist upon its being accompanied or preceded by instruction conducted in a very different spirit to that which generally prevails. If they can once be brought to see that to defer is not to reject the Bible, but rather, if children be wisely dealt by, to take precautions that the Bible shall be in the hands of men capable of appreciating it—incapable of extracting out of it justifications for every description of cruelty, folly, and impertinence, whatever else is desirable will speedily follow.

A teacher, gifted with all the qualifications that a mature intelligence and good disposition can derive from the Bible, is the only Bible adapted to the immaturity of childhood. And he will proceed to unfold himself—the child's Bible—by his daily life and tuition, progressively as the children around him are capable of reading one page after another.

P. Could you not give your unconvinced, or half-convinced friends, for I fancy you are beginning to make a little way with them, some notions of your course of Bible instruction, by turning over a few pages with them as you would with your children?

T. We would not pass lightly over the title-page and introduction. In other words, we preface our instruction with the cultivation of a friendly, confiding intercourse between the children and ourselves. We endeavour to make sure that they will always look to us for consolation in their sorrows, attention to their wrongs, real or supposed, assistance and advice in their difficulties, and explanations of their doubts and misapprehensions. With this preparation, we keep clear of habits of concealment and insincerity. We establish what we think may be called, without offence to religion or reason, a Bible-basis of education, truthfulness of disposition, and a desire to learn, that is, to seek truth.

P. And with such a beginning, are you relieved from all apprehension of being thwarted in the course which you are about to enter upon, or of being disappointed in the end or object at which you are aiming ?

T. No apprehension might imply no pains to guard against disappointment. But our apprehension is less than it would be with any other kind of beginning. Many of the persons who interest themselves about the education of the young seem to forget how unhesitatingly they rely upon some results, while they doubt about others. We submit that the doubts may originate in the ill-contrived or ill-directed efforts employed to produce the results aimed at. All people learn to speak their native tongues. Comparatively few speak other languages than their own ; and fewer still speak them fluently and correctly. The causes of these differences are obvious. We have no doubt of what the result will be when, with the aid of models and experiments, the attention of children is fixed upon the common pump, the air-pump, the force-pump, the squirt, the pop-gun, the barometer, the thermometer, the seconds-clock, the phenomena of combustion, of breathing, of the succession of day and night, of the seasons, and so on.

P. Whose fault will it be if, while this instruction is going on, the interest of the children is not sustained, backwardness is shown in stating difficulties and seeking explanations, or indifference is felt to have their instruction carried forward to other phenomena still mysteries to them ?

T. Their teacher's, whose fault it will also be if, in his instruction in the phenomena of industrial life, he fails to elicit from them a recognition that, as a means of "good and holy living," men must work diligently, intelligently, and skilfully ; that they must save ; that they must be cautious in contracting engagements, and scrupulous in fulfilling them ; strict in respecting the property of others, careful of their own ; and ready to co-operate for the protection of property against those who will not respect it ; and be sober, punctual, and obliging besides.

P. The result of my experience coincides entirely with your own. In maintaining these views, however, you must bear in mind that you are running counter to the strong convictions of a numerous school of divines, who hold that men could never have arrived at these truths, and accordingly could not teach them to their children, unless they had learned them from the Bible. But it is consolatory to know that there are other divines who agree with us that the Bible no more contains expositions of rules of conduct for men than it contains expositions of the forces which regulate all the movements and changes of the physical world. If your "Christian friends" should be among the former, and overpower you with their denunciations on account of your present leanings, you can, in case of need, fly to the latter for spiritual support.

T. You would recommend us, we are sure, to be self-supporting, spiritually as well as physically. We are at a loss to comprehend how anybody can assert that industry, temperance, honesty, and frugality were not held to be virtues before the Christian era, or are not held to be so among the Chinese and other Eastern nations, whose numbers so greatly exceed those of the Christians. In common with them, we have to confess and deplore that the practice of these virtues is sadly behind the profession of them. Christian teachers would do well to addict themselves a little more sedulously to the teaching of these virtues, and to the training in their observance, if they would not forego the most powerful means of "propagating the Gospel in foreign parts," the opportunity of holding up before the eyes of the heathen the conduct and bearing of those who profess a belief in the Gospel.

P. If we and the latter class of divines are correct, reliance on Bible-lessons to impart a knowledge of these and other virtues, and to supply the place of measures for careful training, would go a long way to account for the short-comings in knowledge and practice still observable in the world. If the method of instruction which you are following should, contrary to our expectation, lead to varieties of interpretation and expression,

such varieties will be confined to those portions of doctrine bearing more upon the conduct of man towards God than towards his fellow-men.

T. Will it not be objected here that we show ourselves more indifferent or less particular about the conduct of man to God than about the conduct of man to man ?

P. And may we not answer that the only sure mode of judging of man's conduct towards God is through his conduct to his fellow-men ? And in striving to judge of the comparative results of teaching morality and religion through the Bible, instead of teaching the Bible through morality and religion, will it not be appropriate to put some such question as this : Out of which school will men take the clearest perception of the distinctions between good and bad in the conduct of man to man throughout all the relations of life ?

T. Our answer to this question, and, as we think, the answer of all teachers of ordinary intelligence, who can be induced to give serious attention to what you are advocating and exemplifying, must be : Out of schools in which your method of instruction is adopted. In other schools, the epithets good and bad, religious and irreligious, pious and impious, right and wrong, wise and foolish, are liberally enough applied ; but it is not attempted to explain how one may be distinguished from the other.

P. And what habit is apt to fasten itself upon the young who have not been led to make these distinctions ?

T. That of applying these epithets or of listening to the application of them by others without recognizing any intelligible standard by which to judge whether they are correctly applied.

P. A smile of incredulity will greet you should you pretend to turn out boys from your schools capable of anything better.

T. For that we must be prepared. Teachers who have never seized the thought that all instruction ought to be subservient to forming the capacity of judging aright, and all

training subservient to creating a willingness, an anxiety, a disposition to act in obedience to that judgment, cannot form a conception of the effect that will be produced upon character after a habit has been formed of estimating the goodness of conduct by its tendency to promote well-being. Steadily rising from the simplest to the most complicated cases, a progressive course of the most improving intellectual exercises is presented. A sense of duty, a seriousness, a conscientiousness is felt in forming judgments, in giving expression to them, in applying epithets. The truthfulness of disposition and the desire to learn—to add truth to truth, the basis on which we build, will be strengthened and consolidated as the superstructure proceeds.

P. Might not what you call truthfulness and love of truth wear, to some of your friends, the appearance of arrogance, of presumption, of obstinacy, of intractability?

T. If these friends of ours were in the habit of applying epithets, whether of praise or blame, to God or man, in such a manner as to show plainly, or even to convey the impression, that no intelligible meaning could be attached to their words, our boys' truthfulness and love of truth would certainly make them pause and decline to pronounce in words what their understandings would not justify to them. If compulsion were attempted resistance might follow.

P. Must not such teaching as this—must not the capacity of measuring good and evil by the effect upon human well-being inevitably throw a new light upon many religious notions?

T. It cannot fail to do so. It will put an extinguisher upon the monstrous practice of applying epithets to the Almighty, the nearest approach to justification for which is, that no meaning is attached to them; in other words, that they are uttered thoughtlessly and irreverently. Boys from our schools will be incapable of addressing God—the perfection of goodness and wisdom—as angry, jealous, repentant, sorrowing, and rejoicing, or of accepting such epithets, without reserving to

themselves the right of interpreting them in a sense not derogatory to those high attributes which they know how to appreciate and to adore.

P. How will it affect the practice of specially attributing to God many of the evils and calamities by which the world is visited from time to time, some that in the existing state of knowledge men are unable to guard against, and others which through carelessness, or indolence, or incapacity, engendered by child-neglect, they had failed to avert ?

T. It must lead to the discontinuance of a practice, offensive alike to reason and religion, of singling out occasions of disaster and suffering for invoking God's holy name and deprecating His vengeance, as if He were the author of them in particular—not of the whole scheme of the universe, the conditions of which it is man's business to study, to comprehend and to apply.

P. How are the perpetuation, recurrence and aggravation of causes of human suffering likely to be affected by the abandonment of a practice of imploring Divine intervention, when those causes have ripened into effects from which, for the time, there is no escape ?

T. For the better, because its abandonment will be a sign that men are religiously devoting themselves to the study of the causes of good and evil, and to the guidance of their conduct so as to bring about the recurrence of the first, and to prevent the recurrence of the second. Pestilence and famine, epidemics and other scourges, involving multitudes in misery, are gradually disappearing before the improved religious feelings which condemn as impious and irreverent applications to God to ward off calamitous effects, the causes of which there had been no attempt to study or avert.

P. If we are not mistaken in our convictions that destitution, vice, and crime will afflict society so long as children are debarred from education, and from education at least up to the mark that we have pointed to, what must we say of the practice of those who pray that society may be relieved from

these afflictions, while they make little or no effort to provide the needful education ?

T. That they are adding to the proofs already too abundant, that "to pray" is one thing, and "to be religious" another.

P. There does not seem to be any very wide difference of opinion between us as to what constitutes a religious man. May I now understand that, if left at liberty to carry out education to the best of your own judgment, you would expect to send forth children from your schools who will, when men, come up to a standard of religious character satisfactory to all reasonable judges ; who will, when men, be acquainted with their duties, disposed to perform them, and capable of reading, understanding, and appreciating the Bible ?

T. It would not become us to say that we feel confident of our ability to train up such men ; but we believe that by our method of education we may be more hopeful of success than by any other method.

P. I share in your belief. The difficulty for you will be to convince the public that a method which aims at no more than cultivating truthfulness of disposition, and so feeding and directing that inquisitiveness and desire of knowledge and aptitude inherent in children, as to lead on to the love of truth and excellence, will not fail to develop also the capacity to understand the Bible and to do credit in conduct to the lessons deducible from its pages.

T. We shall do our best to bring the public to adopt our views by maintaining our schools in a high state of efficiency, and by inviting inspection and a careful examination of the work as it is going on in them. If the reasonableness of our expectations, and the judgment with which our methods are acted upon, fail to make the impression which we hope for, we must be content to abide the result of our work after it has been completed, in the attainments, the demeanour, and the conduct of the men whom we shall have educated as boys.

P. We hear a great deal, as you know, of what your friends call the religious difficulty, or, as I call it, the irreligious

difficulty—one of the main obstacles in the way of that general diffusion of education agreed by everybody to be desirable. Would not this difficulty be removed if we could bring all churches and sects to place more reliance on the truth of their own tenets, and on their capacity to expound them to men of mature and vigorous understandings ?

T. It would. We fear, however, that few churches and sects carry their notions of faith so far beyond words as to be prepared to submit their tenets to so severe an ordeal. With the course of instruction which we pursue, it seems inevitable that the children will learn and adopt the fundamentals of all religion—at all events, of every denomination of the Christian religion ; they being a collection of truths as plain and simple as the plainest and simplest truths on any subjects taught in schools, and concerning the eventual understanding and adoption of which by learners, no teacher ever entertains the slightest doubt. The peculiarities, the ceremonies, the observances, the forms, the pageantries, and the rites which distinguish one church or sect from others could not, of course, command the same unanimous acquiescence.

P. By your account, it would almost appear as if they who interposed their religious difficulties to prevent the diffusion of education were determined that children should either be shaped into Christians after their pattern, or not be allowed to grow up into Christians at all.

ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.



T. We trust you will not consider us encroaching on your kindness, or disposed thoughtlessly to pester you with our difficulties; but we must confess to be unequal to answer all the objections and cautions that are urged against our attempts to act upon your views, and to introduce into our schools lessons in imitation of those which we have so often listened to from you.

P. Will not these difficulties continue to perplex you, so long as you act upon my views, and give lessons in imitation of those you have heard from me? Before you can approach perfection in teaching, or expect to attain readiness in meeting objectors or detractors, must you not act upon your own views, and draw your lessons direct from them?

T. If we were not impressed with the necessity of attaining to the capacity suggested by your questions, we should be unworthy of the pains that you have taken in our behalf. We cannot, however, flatter ourselves with more than being on the road to attain that capacity,—a road which we should probably never have travelled, but for you, and on which we may yet be long detained, if you leave us entirely to our own resources.

P. Are you warranted in adopting any views, accepting any conclusions, and in acting confidently upon them, so long as objections are urged involving contradictions which you cannot explain? Are not apparent contradictions unexplained difficulties, through which all principles must pass, before they can be honestly and unreservedly accepted, and also through which

all learners must pass before they can be said to have made the principles their own ?

T. It is our deep sense of the responsibility which we are incurring, and of our present unfitness to do justice to the new views and methods, while our confidence in much hitherto received without question has been utterly destroyed, that drives us to hang upon you for the continuance of that help which has already conferred such benefits upon us.

P. What are these new difficulties or objections which have crossed your path, and apparently discomposed you ?

T. We have been remonstrated with and reproached in tones almost conveying a threat to put a stop to our freedom of action. The method which we have borrowed from you, and applied, in spite of our want of experience, with so much satisfaction to our boys, will make them, we are told, pert, presumptuous, disputatious, disobedient, cold, hard, calculating, sceptical, irreverent, and much besides that nobody would wish to see in the young.

P. Here is certainly a formidable array of bad qualities charged as the effect of your teaching, and you might well express your dismay at such results unlooked for by you, and which, if they did come upon you by surprise, nobody would be more anxious than yourselves to guard against and prevent in future. Have you observed any increased symptoms of the odious qualities pointed at in the demeanour and carriage of your boys since you introduced your new method ?

T. We should say quite the reverse. We never before met with such uninterrupted deference and attention, never resorted so little to threats and impositions, never found our boys so tractable—so amenable to appeals to their reason and sense of duty.

P. And how is it that the improved demeanour of your boys should have escaped the notice of those who have been disturbing your peace ?

T. We fancy that the words were spoken in anger, and without much thought. People unaccustomed to see boys taking

pains to form their own opinions, and hesitating to adopt without examination the opinions of others thrust upon them, get annoyed at meeting with inquiries in the place of ready acquiescence—with what, perhaps, they call resistance and contumaciousness.

P. And when they smart at being unexpectedly pulled up, and asked for an explanation which they cannot give, they discover that your style of instruction is unfitted for children.

T. Yes ; and they tell us that the memories and fancies of children should be more appealed to than their reasoning faculties ; assuming that, because we lead the children to exercise their reasoning faculties, we neglect the exercise of other faculties : which we do not.

P. This is by no means an uncommon form of administering censure undeserved. Persons propose to fill up gaps, or to supply deficiencies which they have noticed. Straightway they, who ought to be ashamed that such deficiencies had not long ago been observed and supplied by themselves, object that attention should be given to other things besides, as if anybody ever pretended or could maintain that it should not. If I remonstrate with a man for neglecting to whitewash his house, what would be thought of his reproaching me vehemently for wishing to prevent his looking after his furniture ?

T. It is almost beyond endurance to be thwarted as we are in the discharge of our duties.

P. You must not make matters worse by neglecting to deal with the stings inflicted in the way most likely to neutralize or counteract the venom in them.

T. What use is there in our attempting to reason with our tormentors, if they will not be reasoned with ?

P. More than would appear at the first glance. Opportunities may arise, when they will be compelled, if not to reason, or to listen to reason, to bend to the wills of those who can be influenced by reason. Suppose, now, as you know more of these men than I do, you endeavour to answer me in their behalf, while I try to extract from them reasons, if they have

any, for their objections to your teaching the children to distinguish between right and wrong, good and bad, wise and foolish, and so on. I will begin by asking—Do they object to your giving religious instruction ?

T. No. They cannot do that. Their objection to you is that you exclude religion from your teaching.

P. This misrepresentation of my teaching being a repetition of what I have long been accustomed to from them, I am not taken by surprise. But our business now is neither with what I teach, nor with what I omit to teach. It appears that I can please them neither way. I want to get from them, through you, what they are doing, or what they would be doing. As you say they do not object to your giving religious instruction, do they object to your giving that instruction in your own way, or are they indifferent what religion you teach, and how you teach it ?

T. They certainly have been raising objections to the method which we are now anxious to introduce. But their answer would be that they are far from indifferent ; and that they desire the true religion to be taught, and in a way likely to induce feelings of piety and reverence in the learners.

P. Already you see the advantage of not despairing of the influence of reason. We have discovered a common basis of agreement on which to rest before prosecuting an inquiry, which, if it will not land us in agreement, may teach us where and why we differ. True religion only is to be taught, and in a way likely to induce feelings of piety and reverence in the children. As this implies that what commonly goes by the name of religion may be true or false, and that the methods of teaching may be well or ill adapted to generate feelings of piety and reverence, let us proceed to inquire which is to be considered the true religion that ought to be taught ?

T. The Christian religion.

P. But as we have many Christian churches, each of which interprets differently in some respects, and differences of interpretation in the same church, we must inquire if, amid all

these differences, there be any articles of belief in which all are agreed.

T. We cannot err in offering “ belief in God ” as a first and fundamental article of belief among all churches and denominations of Christians.

P. Now as neither you nor your friends, however obstructive they may be to you in other respects, would wish religious instruction to stop here, as you would deem it incumbent upon you that children should learn who and what God is for whom their love and reverence are claimed ; how would you represent Him ?

T. As a Being of infinite goodness and wisdom.

P. And how does he show His goodness to mankind ?

T. In many ways ; but as regards our special purpose, the instruction of our children, in enjoining men so to conduct themselves towards one another, as to promote the comfort and happiness of all.

P. And is it wished to inspire children with love and reverence for this Being, exalted as He is above other beings—the perfection of goodness and wisdom ?

T. On this point, again, there can be no difference of opinion.

P. Your vocation makes you familiar with the capabilities of children. You know how easy it is to bring them acquainted with matters unknown and unsolvable by the most cultivated men of former days, provided the proofs on which the knowledge rests are placed before them, step by step, for them to examine and digest ; and how impossible it is to impart this knowledge, if any links in the chain of proof and exposition be omitted. Do you not endeavour to follow a course, based upon your experience of child-nature, tenderly and yet earnestly, with much or little repetition and illustration, according to your estimate of the progress and capacity of your pupils ?

T. That is our aim, however far we may be from accomplishing what we aim at.

P. Would you, from time to time, as your children might

be supposed to have reached certain stages of progress, set them to expound what they held to be knowledge—to prove the truth of the propositions in which it was expressed, the statements of facts, and of the inferences deduced from them, so that no doubt might remain in your minds that the words uttered by them were representations of real knowledge, not counterfeits cleverly used to conceal its absence ?

T. We also endeavour to apply this test, and it is gratifying to see how the children delight in an exercise which enables them to confirm what they know, to correct their errors, and to withdraw or modify assertions not borne out by proof, or irreconcilable with other propositions which cannot be shaken.

P. Might you not, by pursuing a different course, bring the children to a habit and readiness of prating about, not the things which they ought to know, but the names of the things—repeating words and phrases out of books ?

T. We might do this ; and we fear it is too often done.

P. Which course of instruction appears to you most likely to produce pert and presumptuous pupils ?

T. There can be no doubt the latter. A course of instruction in which to pause, to inquire, to put forth an interpretation or explanation, with the knowledge that it is to be defended and established, or to be modified or retracted, can scarcely do otherwise than contribute to modesty and diffidence in manner, as well as to integrity and self-reliance in understanding.

P. Raising our thoughts to the sublimest of all the subjects that can occupy the mind—religion : how would you act towards your boys in regard to that ? Should we begin by teaching them to lisp the name of God, and to characterize Him in their prayers and thoughts as good, just, merciful, glad, sorry, angry, powerful, repentant, revengeful, wise, &c., or should we first enable them to understand the attributes, on account of which some of these epithets may, and others may not, be prefixed to His name ?

T. The latter course seems best adapted to awaken feelings

of intelligent reverence towards the Almighty, and to secure children against that degradation of their own understandings, and that impiety towards God, which takes the form of heaping epithet upon epithet upon Him—the perfection of goodness and wisdom—let those epithets be ever so incongruous, and ever so much in contradiction one with another.

P. Do you consider that a capacity to appreciate the Divine attributes is to be expected in very young children?

T. Scarcely.

P. Is it desirable to build up this capacity as speedily as is compatible with stability?

T. Most desirable; and the building it up effectually ought to be considered one of the main purposes of religious education.

P. You would not imitate those disreputable builders who scamp the foundations of their houses and other important parts which, being covered in, escape the notice of the inexperienced and confiding. The tenants who are entrapped into the occupation discover after a time, through perpetual annoyance and expense, and perhaps through deteriorated health, how grievously they have been imposed upon, in spite of the showy decorations by which they had been captivated.

T. We have seen enough to convince us that a young man sent forth into the world familiar with Scripture phrases, but a stranger to religious convictions and feelings, is all the more endangered and the more dangerous by his Scripture phrases. Through them he imposes upon himself as well as upon others; they supply him with ready excuses for his follies and iniquities, for his commission of evil and his omissions of good; they are the paper, putty, and paint, which conceal the cracks in the walls and the dry-rot in the timbers.

P. Does it behove us to be specially vigilant and careful lest notions derogatory to Divine excellence should stealthily ensconce themselves in the children's minds?

T. Too much care could hardly be taken to prevent such "leprous instilment."

P. Nobody but an empty boaster would deny the difficulty as well as the delicacy of the attempt to cultivate religious feelings in the minds of children, guarding at the same time against the intrusion of thoughts derogatory to Divine goodness and wisdom. It may help us to a knowledge of means and methods available for the task, if you would give me some idea how you would set to work with your own families, with children between whom and yourselves there is no opportunity for the interference of ignorant obstructors.

T. We should limit any activity of effort to induce religious feelings, in the first instance, to so watching our own conduct, and so directing the discipline of the family, as to raise in the minds of our children a sense of our unswerving love and kindness to them. We would observe the effect of this conduct upon their dispositions, and hope gradually to see developed in them a reliance on our love and care for them, and on our wisdom and justice, the consequences of which would be affection, respect, and obedience from themselves towards us. This would serve as a foundation whereon to build love and reverence towards God the Father of all—supremely good and wise, and obedience to His will.

P. I approve your method thus far ; but my office must be to point out the hindrances which will trouble you in carrying out your purpose. You may not be altogether free from infirmities of temper. Squabbles will occur among the children and their companions ; and ill conduct in the household, as well as from without, must be expected.

T. It is no part of our plan to hold ourselves up to our children as models of perfection. We would do nothing to prevent their understanding that, great as was our love, God's love was incomparably greater ; and earnest as might be our wish to act wisely and rightly, and successful as we might appear in the main to them, God's wisdom and goodness were above anything that man could hope to attain.

P. Your children cannot be expected altogether to escape suffering from illness and accident. Will they be disposed to

attribute any portion of their suffering to your negligence in protecting and saving them ?

T. We do not imagine that such thoughts would arise, although we will not say that they might not. There could not be much difficulty, however, in bringing the children to comprehend that they, in common with their parents and all other human beings, are liable to suffering from illness, accident, and want ; and that the power of their parents is limited. Children will readily learn that, by wisdom and care, their parents can do much to prevent illness and accidents and want, and to alleviate the suffering from them when they do occur, but that they cannot keep them away altogether.

P. When you are magnifying the goodness and wisdom and power of God to your children, would they not ask how it was that God, so overflowing as He is with goodness and wisdom, did not put forth His power to protect His creatures from suffering ?

T. These questions do arise with all children ; and a very little reflection ought to satisfy us that the omnipotence of the Almighty is a theme that must be reserved for riper years.

P. And if their understandings were to rebel against your wish to impose silence upon their efforts to learn how to reconcile the existence of evil with the goodness, the wisdom, and the power of God, how would you act ?

T. We would do nothing that should indicate a wish to impose any restriction upon their freedom of thought and inquiry. But we would not hesitate to declare to them our sense of their incapacity, irremovable except with years, to engage in the investigation of a subject that proves too difficult for many who attain to maturity. We should hope that our influence would enable us to reconcile them to repress their inquisitiveness and suspend their judgment, while following up with energy, under our guidance, those studies which may make their understandings competent to appreciate God's attributes and to interpret His will.

P. Will your sense of the intellectual feebleness of children

lead you to defer further efforts for forming their religious characters?

T. We do not see how we can be charged with deferring efforts for forming religious characters, if we are doing the very best that child-nature admits of our doing. Premature and ill-directed attempts might prevent rather than promote the formation of religious characters. We could do nothing better than teach our young children elementary arithmetic in order to make accomplished mathematicians of them. Proficiency at maturity in any branch of knowledge is not to be expected where the immaturity of childhood is disregarded.

P. I am curious to hear a little more what your expectations may be from this foundation.

T. They are very great; and we will try to explain why a religious character is not to be built on the intellect alone: and yet the intellect must neither be imposed upon nor offended. We look to domestic influences for the growth of a love for goodness, of a desire for wisdom, and of an inclination to love and respect those in whom these two qualities are to be found united. Intelligence gradually expanded in children animated with these affections must yield religious fruits in abundance. While their intelligence and good feelings are thus ripening in harmony, will it not be a great advantage for them to be spared the imposition of a mass of unintelligible and contradictory dogmas setting all sense and good feeling at defiance?

P. Can you expect that they will escape coming in contact with much of the fabulous and unintelligible jargon which so many are attempting to pass off as religion?

T. We ought not to expect, nor do we, that they will. Our business should be to prepare them for suffering contact without contamination. What better safeguard can we hope for against those who, under the name of religion, would utter their foul aspersions upon the Almighty, than a love and respect for goodness and wisdom?

P. Is not the rejection of what we call fabulous and unin-

tellible sufficient to bring down upon those who avow it the imputation of infidelity ?

T. It is ; they who make it being unconscious of the proof which they are thereby giving of their own infidelity, if we must use that term. To believe in the infinite goodness and wisdom of God, is to disbelieve that any thing cruel or silly can be countenanced by Him. To believe that any thing cruel or silly has been sanctioned by Him, is to want faith in his goodness and wisdom. Which is the infidelity to be denounced ? which the faith to be upheld ?

P. You proceed upon the conviction that children, like grown-up people, will venture occasionally out of their depth. As you cannot prevent this dangerous practice, you do the next best thing. You teach them to swim, so that they may survive and regain land. You must be anxious to ascertain from time to time that they are acquiring strength, sagacity, and self-reliance enough to buffet against the eddies, and steer through the reefs and rocks, which might prevent their return. Will not many of the perplexing statements and wild assertions in the name of religion be addressed to them by persons who, by their position, almost command deference, especially from the young ?

T. They will. But it is nothing new that the emancipation of each generation from the weaknesses which cramped its predecessor is beset with difficulties. Deference to age and authority is a duty ; but deference to truth, and goodness, and wisdom, is a greater. As no deference towards ourselves would be exacted from them which was not subordinated to that which is greater than ourselves, they will not be predisposed to pay greater deference to others less intimately attached to them.

P. You must excuse a little repetition ; but I wish to make quite sure that I enter fully into your plans. The foundation on which you rely for the superstructure of a religious character is—habits of good conduct formed by imitation and example, and strengthened by feelings of love, gratitude, and respect ;

and intelligence, day by day, awakening to a wider and juster appreciation of the distinctions between right and wrong, good and bad, just and unjust. You cannot conceive any better preparation whereon to form a mind capable of contemplating and appreciating "the perfection of goodness and wisdom." Is this a fair statement of your scheme of religious teaching and training for children ?

T. Yes. And we believe it to be the readiest and safest, although we give offence to those who charge us with neglecting religion, because we decline to take God's holy name in vain, or to invoke it falsely and unworthily.

P. Knowing as you do the sea of error and absurdity through which your pupils will have to steer, will you leave them to embark upon it with no other preparation, or will you attempt to give them some inkling of what they have to expect ?

T. It is our duty not only to form habits and impart intelligence wherewith our pupils may successfully combat errors and absurdities, but to apprise them, as far as possible, of the forms in which error and absurdity will disguise themselves so as to undermine good habits and outwit intelligence.

P. The minds over which you keep watch being confessedly immature and incapable of grappling with all the difficulties inherent in religious subjects, how can you circumscribe these difficulties so as to present a satisfactory view as far as it extends, and yet carry conviction of its perfect fairness ?

T. By avowing plainly what we omit and why, and showing that our omissions cannot affect the conclusions to be drawn from what we retain for examination.

P. What do your omissions consist of ?

T. The difficulties involved in the co-existence of evil and omnipotence, as irreconcilable with infinite goodness and wisdom.

P. And what do you retain ?

T. Quite enough for the continuous exercise of a progressively expanding intelligence : the exposition and enumeration of all the kinds of conduct of man to man conducive to the

general well-being, which kinds of conduct must be conformable to the will of God, being in perfect harmony with Divine goodness and wisdom.

P. Might it not be objected that since God appears quite tolerant of the physical causes, so he might be of the moral causes of human misery ?

T. If any children could raise such an objection, which we doubt, we would meet it by directing them to an exercise quite within the range of their limited powers—to an examination of what religion is not and cannot be, of what the Almighty cannot be shown to sanction or to have sanctioned—an admirable preparation for that higher exercise of the more matured powers in rising to the knowledge of what religion is.

P. And how will you shape your course in order to bring about this exercise of your children's powers upon what religion is not and cannot be ?

T. We shall turn to account the line of instruction for which we are indebted to you. You will readily understand that our children, from the earliest age, are learning, little by little, how men have contrived to supply themselves with the means of comfortable existence ready prepared for their use and enjoyment ; how they cultivate the ground, manufacture raw produce, build, furnish, intercommunicate, train the young to follow in and improve upon the ways of their fathers, provide hospitals for the sick and maimed, and asylums for the destitute, the blind, the deaf and dumb, and the insane ; and how men may hope, by improved conduct, to obtain a yet higher state of enjoyment, and still further to mitigate suffering which it has proved beyond their strength to prevent. While this instruction is going on, such questions as these will inevitably arise : Ought men to have conducted themselves so as to have brought about the present state of things ? Ought they to persevere in a similar course of conduct ? Ought they to try to improve upon it, in the hope of still further extending human happiness—staving off human misery ?—and why ?

P. And you think teachers will have little claim to respect

who cannot call forth in their pupils the intelligence to approve what their forefathers have accomplished towards making life an improved inheritance, and what is being done to continue the improvement for which there is so much room ; and the ambition to become qualified to perform their part in the work without which the good so far gained can neither be preserved nor extended.

T. Just so. Neither you nor we have any doubt that it is possible so to conduct education as to impress upon children the conviction that the comfortable existence of each and of all depends upon conduct, and that therefore it is the duty of each to himself and to others so to conduct himself as to promote the general well-being ; and, as a preliminary, to learn how to conduct himself and to discipline himself to the performance of what he knows to be his duty.

P. The repetition of the divine precept, " Love one another," unaccompanied by such instruction and capacity of self-discipline, would be nothing more than the pretence of a religious education. An injunction to do good and to abstain from evil, without the ability to distinguish one from the other, and without the disposition to give a preference to one over the other, would carry no weight with those to whom it might be given, and do small honour to those who could give it.

T. Our present task is to show that an education conducted as we suggest is not only an admirable preparation for religious knowledge and feeling, but a preservative—an antidote against that corrupting and poisonous matter so frequently administered as religion to children, incapacitating them when arrived at adult age to understand or to cherish, or to do what religion enjoins.

P. Let us now have some examples of the deleterious matter with which you apprehend your pupils may be assailed, and against which your course of instruction is to act as an antidote.

T. Warnings, in the name of Religion, against the desire and the effort to accumulate riches, will meet their ears at every

turn ; stripped somewhat, it is true, of what might otherwise be their terrifying effects, on account of the evident inattention paid to those warnings, however solemnly uttered. Our pupils will know that no good work can be done by anybody without riches of his own or access to the riches of others. Without their aid the sick could not be cured, nor the hungry fed, nor the naked clothed, nor the houseless sheltered, nor children taught ; the widow and fatherless could not be comforted. But these are duties which they know ought to be performed, with others, besides, which require the aid of riches. Where is your proof, they will ask, that the performance of these duties is unacceptable to God ? Have you not the sense to perceive that your denunciation of riches is a denunciation of these duties ? Do you not believe in His goodness ? Our faith in God's goodness is at least strong enough to resist your feeble efforts to shake it.

They will be told that God has sanctioned, and continues to sanction, preparations by one nation to inflict injuries upon other nations ; slaughter, plunder, destruction, and ill-usage worse than these, being their purpose, and part of the inducement with many to enlist in them. Where is the proof, they will ask, which warrants your daring to affirm that God can take delight in seeing men inflict misery upon one another ? You have no faith in His goodness, but happily for us you are impotent to shake ours.

They will hear pestilence and famine described as manifestations of God's wrath. They will recognize them as awful calamities. They will know that in proportion as knowledge and the wise use of it have gained ground, these calamities have become less severe and less frequent. They will be capable of anticipating their progressive disappearance before the further spread of knowledge and good conduct. And they will say to these monsters in human shape—the offspring of irreligion and ignorance—where is the proof on which you presume to tarnish the attributes of the Almighty with one of the vilest weaknesses of an ill-conditioned man ?

They will hear men who live very comfortably under the protection of Government, with its police and army, objecting to pay in the shape of taxes for the protection which they enjoy, on account of their religious scruples—because it is unlawful to resist evil, or to remunerate others who incur hardship and risk their lives to guard society from evil. Our pupils will know that the prevalence of a respect for property is essential to a high state of well-being, and that protection is necessary to guard the majority who feel this respect against the small number who do not. And they will ask, where is the proof that arrangements for affording this protection can be displeasing to God? Is it impiety, or stupidity, or a combination of both concealed in cant and hypocrisy, which prevents your perceiving that to impute to the Almighty a disapproval of the efforts of mankind to secure their own well-being by organizing protection to life and property, is to deny His goodness?

They will be assailed with attempts to terrify them into the belief that a state of excruciating and never-ending torment is in store for them after death, that escape from it is reserved for few, and how to be included among these few is difficult to be ascertained. For it is represented that some are to incur this dreadful fate by departing from the religion of their fathers, some by refusing to depart from it, and some because they cannot help doubting what appears to them incredible and disbelieving what is palpably false. If they could but be imposed upon, they might believe that no length of good service to their fellow-creatures would justify their hopes of escape, while escape might not be altogether impossible after a life of iniquity followed by repentance. To make the absurdity of these appeals to the fears of the weak and superstitious still more glaring, they will be accompanied by assertions that to disregard them is to sap the foundations on which alone expectations of good conduct can be built with safety. Our pupils will ask where is the proof for all this farrago of contradictions? Can the utterers of such atrocities be aware that the God which they worship, and at whose shrine they would make us and

others fall down, is not the “perfection of goodness and wisdom,” but a hideous spectre, the creature of their own evil imaginations, whose appetite for human misery they hope to satiate by the ready sacrifice of their neighbours, fawning and flattering all the time to ingratiate themselves, so as to be spared to witness, in the company of their spectre-god, the writhings and agonies of the tortured.

A greater danger than from any of these sources awaits them. They will see men rolling in wealth, revelling in luxury, surrounded by all the paraphernalia of finery and show, while swarms of children are suffered to grow up into paupers and criminals from the mere want of some of that wealth thus profusely consumed, a judicious application of which would secure for these neglected and ill-used children a probable future of happiness and respectability. They will see rich men living in this way, models of propriety and decorum, regular at public worship, making long faces, and offering long prayers, and deprecating with up-turned eyes every attempt to extend education to all children unalloyed with the condition of their being ruthlessly subjected to unintelligible and therefore repulsive or damaging Bible-lessons; and deluding themselves and others into the belief that they are religious men. Our pupils will ask, where is the proof that men like these deserve to be called religious? Who is a religious man? Must he not obey the will of God? Does not God will that men shall so conduct themselves towards one another as to promote the general well-being? Can men know what kind of conduct will best do this, if uninstructed? Can men be formed to practise this conduct, at all events to abstain from conduct destructive of well-being, so regularly and instinctively as that the wish to act otherwise shall not occur to them if, while children, they be left untrained? And is there any hope of seeing men thus instructed and disposed, if they be uncared for as children? Out upon you, they will exclaim; go and perform these very obvious duties so long neglected towards children, and then we may consider you religious, without your claiming to be so called.

P. As I think we are now beginning to understand one another, I will try to put together the heads of what we conceive to be the course of education best adapted to form good and religious men. We acknowledge that the work ought to begin with life, and yet we would not think of making religious babes-at-the-breast, nor talk of God to lisping infants. Nevertheless, if adults do their duty, a loving and loveable world may be made to dawn upon childhood. This is the only reliable foundation on which to build a superstructure of religion. More properly, this is the kind of soil in which alone religion will grow and flourish. Thoughts of loving and being loved, of giving and receiving pleasure, of benefiting and being benefited, of abstaining from infraction of others' enjoyments and feeling one's own to be respected, of assisting to prevent and resist evil from whatever source arising, with the conviction that others are equally anxious to guard us: this, with the instruction to show children how to distinguish between good and bad, right and wrong; how to do good and how to avoid doing mischief: by such treatment will children be prepared to form a just appreciation of the Divine attributes, and to be filled with love and reverence for the perfection of goodness and wisdom. By such treatment will children be prepared to see through the impious counterfeits attempted to be passed off in the world as religion, and to resist contamination from the evil influences by which they will continue to be surrounded till mankind has learned to throw off the superstitions and atrocities represented as religious, the inheritance from ages of barbarism.

T. We see nothing to object to in this summary. To attain to perfection in carrying out such a course of education is more than we dare hope for; but by aiming at it we shall approach to it nearer and nearer, while, by not aiming at it, education would seem to be almost without purpose.

P. On so vital a subject, on so religious a duty as education, we cannot be too cautious. A theory of education, let it appear ever so complete, ever so harmonious in all its parts, cannot

be unhesitatingly accepted till it has been put to the test of repeated trials. Human sagacity seems unequal to form a system free from imperfections till its defects of omission and arrangement have been forced upon the notice by shortcomings, by failures, and by damages sustained in the place of benefits received. We ought even to turn to account the objections urged upon us by those who are virulently and captiously opposed to everything new. In their undiscriminating hostility they might stumble upon a real defect, want of attention to which would mar the beauty of our work, and make it less acceptable. We ought not, therefore, to lose sight of those objections which seem to have ruffled you ; and we may as well, before we separate, ask ourselves whether our proposed course of instruction can tend to make boys or men disputatious.

T. “Disputatious” is one of those ugly words which convey disapprobation of a mode of dealing with propositions and assertions, sometimes desirable and sometimes not, without indicating when it is and when it is not desirable.

P. Ought not people who are addicted to the ugly use of ugly words to be driven to the necessity of justifying their use of them, or of retracting them ? Are we not entitled to ask, for instance, if a man who is known to dispute a doctrine or many doctrines deserves the epithet “disputatious,” whether the doctrines which he disputes be true or false, or where he himself is convinced, rightly or wrongly, of the validity of his own doubts and objections ?

T. They would answer only when he disputes the true, or when he is not convinced by his own objections.

P. And ought he to resist having any doctrine imposed upon him till he has had an opportunity of examining whether it be true or false ?

T. We should say that he ought. But you know how prevalent the practice is of trying to impose doctrines upon others, especially upon the young ; and how great the irritation is when doctrines which have been accepted without exami-

nation, and for which the justification is not at hand, are questioned.

P. Which conduces most to the love of truth—the acceptance of doctrines before examination, or after their truth has been ascertained by examination ?

T. As to that, there is no difference of opinion between us.

P. Are we not entitled to ask, then, whether it be to serve the cause of truth and improvement to deter from the examination of doctrines before accepting them, or to discourage a determined rejection of them when found to be untenable, by pronouncing those who are thus disposed to be disputatious ?

T. These considerations, we should think, must find favour at last with all who have control over education, and lead them, first, to allow the young freedom of examination, and afterwards, to encourage them in the exercise of it. The command which adults have over the circumstances surrounding the young, judiciously used, will suffice to keep away from them what might operate hurtfully, or interrupt their progress.

P. As regards making children sceptical or irreverent, we may ask, ought children to doubt nothing, and revere everything ?

T. The moment an opportunity is given for putting such questions, and obtaining attention to them, misunderstanding must vanish. Children, and men too, ought to doubt what has not been satisfactorily explained to them, and they ought not to revere what is false, bad, foolish, and contradictory. In fact, their reverence in that direction must be incompatible with reverence for truth, goodness, and wisdom.

P. In the shower of epithets with which your objectors hoped to flood and sweep away your teachings, there were some others not unlikely to have more weight, if thought to be deserved, than the very serious ones which we have examined. A cold, hard, calculating man, would be generally understood to be one disinclined to share his crust with a starving fellow-creature, or to forego superfluities for the sake of placing necessaries within reach of the destitute, or to hazard life to

rescue another from impending destruction, or to become surety or bail to advance a friend or extricate him from difficulty. Does our teaching, think you, tend to form such unamiable and despicable characters ?

T. The imputation could not be hazarded by anybody who had the slightest notion of what is uppermost in our thoughts and what we are striving to impress upon our children. We will not venture to say that we expect the men who shall have been educated in our schools to prove more courageous, daring, and generous than their countrymen, although we don't know why they should prove less so. But upon the duties owed by the successful and well-to-do in the world towards the unsuccessful and suffering, we shall be disappointed if our calculating children do not prove a few degrees in advance of others to whom our descriptions of lessons are unknown.

In the first place, we aspire so to teach and train, as that a much smaller proportion than usual of our children shall fall into the destitute class—shall find it necessary to put forth any appeal for assistance from the well-to-do. Next, gradually as our children form distinct and vivid conceptions of the conditions of industrial success, and feel that they are acquiring the habits and capacity which will enable them to comply with these conditions, we are most careful to omit no effort to secure their imbibing a sense of the duties attached to the possession of superabundant wealth, as well as of the enjoyment which they may derive from it. When the attention of boys is called to the fact that superabundance of wealth comes to the possession of comparatively few, and that it is difficult to prognosticate which of them will be among those few ; and an appeal is made to them to explain in what way it will be most for the general happiness that they should be resolving, while young, to employ their superabundance, if it should be allotted to them,—we have never missed eliciting from our children, in tones expressive of deep feelings and strong conviction, that to spend wealth upon tawdry finery, vain display, and luxurious indulgence, while there is suffering left unmitigated, and ignorance left

uninstructed from the want of it, would evince a baseness and callousness of feeling which they will strive with all their might to prevent being ever chargeable against them.

P. This reply of yours will touch a sympathetic chord in the breasts of some of those who are only suspicious of you because they have never thought of the great omission in education which we are endeavouring to supply. We need not fear that any loss will be sustained by the world when the present generation of warm, impulsive, soft, generous-minded Christian-like rich men, is replaced by the cold, hard, calculating men formed out of the children reared in your schools.

ON TOLERANCE AND INTOLERANCE.

T. It will not surprise you to learn from us that we have not yet been able to relieve ourselves from all our doubts, hesitations, and anxieties, acted upon as we must be, in common with others, by the turmoil of conflicting opinions and by our experience of the different kinds of conduct to which varieties of opinion necessarily lead. Ought we to think the worse of people with whom we differ in opinion? Ought we to make distinctions in our conduct between them and others with whom we agree? More than this, can we control our inclinations to make such distinctions? And if not, might our inclinations have been different had our early education been better conducted? and how may it be hoped to bring about the desirable state of feeling in this respect in the young, whose understandings and opinions it is our business to form? We confess to you our inability to see our way to a satisfactory solution of these questions.

P. You feel that if every difference of opinion were to be productive of coolness, dislike, estrangement, or bitterness, social intercourse would be sadly interrupted.

T. The larger part of the benefit and all the pleasure derivable from it would be destroyed.

P. You also feel that you cannot be indifferent to the opinions which you hold and which others hold, especially upon subjects where errors of judgment might lead to deplorable conduct. Nor could you be unmoved when observing in your friends symptoms of indifference to the opinions which

they professed on matters universally considered to be most important.

T. A general indifference as to the truth or falseness of convictions, or, which amounts to the same thing, a disinclination to take pains for the purpose of ascertaining the true and false in important statements of fact, and the right and wrong in lines of conduct, would not be a commendable trait of national character, nor be likely to contribute to the improvement as well as to the pleasure which we look for from social intercourse. We would certainly not desire to form our society and connections out of men of this stamp.

P. Would you prefer earnest men who deviate from the beaten track in their opinions—perhaps from your opinions, which you hold only because you are convinced of their soundness, to the men who glide listlessly down the current of opinion, taking up as they go along with the prevailing truths and errors of the day?

T. Our leaning would be towards the earnest and truthful, though, as we might think, mistaken men.

P. Whose word would you be more disposed to trust? Whose evidence, as far as that evidence was meant to convey the actual thoughts of the witness, would carry the greater weight with you?

T. The scrupulously conscientious man, again, would have our ear and our confidence.

P. Whose advice would you take? By whose counsel would you prefer to guide your own conduct?

T. We should prefer to guide our conduct by our own counsel; but when driven to claim the assistance of others, we seek to know something more about them than their truthfulness and zeal for enlightenment, invaluable as those qualities are. We should ask for proofs of their experience, their attainments, their capacity. The character which they enjoy for all these qualifications might attract us in the first instance. Many of our movements in life are determined through the estimate already made by others of the qualifications of those

among whom we are compelled to seek that guidance which, unaided, we feel incapable of supplying to ourselves.

P. Incapacity, or any other cause of misjudgment in others, would lead you to fear that your conduct might be wrong if determined by them; but your want of confidence would not be caused by their want of conscientiousness.

T. Their incapacity alone would prevent our accepting their advice. Our respect for their conscientiousness would make us regret that so high a recommendation was not associated with the other recommendations which might admit of our profiting by it.

P. As you might not be able to shape your course by the advice of a man merely because he was truthful, might you also be unable to approve his conduct?

T. We might.

P. Might you find yourselves driven to condemn it very severely?

T. Having to do with the children of many ignorant, though truthful and well-intentioned parents, we are frequently asked to flog children for faults committed at home. We refuse, of course, and explain why we refuse. If not at first, after a time, most of the parents come over to our views. They see how well discipline is maintained in our schools without violence, by the force of example, and by occasional appeals to intelligence and good-feeling. But it has happened that some unfortunate little fellow has not been let off at home. A father who thinks himself religious justifies his resort to violence with "Spare the rod, spoil the child;" or excuses the pain which he inflicts upon himself as well as his child, by "I could have overlooked any other fault, but I cannot suffer my child to grow up a liar," unconscious that mis-treatment had first made the child a coward, and that dread of further ill-treatment might deaden all truthfulness in him.

P. Other resources for the protection of children failing, would you not deprive parents of the liberty of so misusing their power?

T. It is more easy to forbid parents to act harshly and unwisely by their children than to prevent them. Unless domestic or school punishment be administered with extreme severity or be followed by dangerous consequences, magisterial or judicial interference, it is thought, might make the position of children worse than before. Midas, on the bench, if appealed to, will sometimes screen the culprit, and even refer with complacency to the benefit which he was sensible of having derived from similar castigation. We know of no other effectual means of protecting children against harsh and injudicious treatment at the hands of parents and teachers than the diffusion of wiser thoughts upon the subject of education, backed by the influence of the example of those who are effecting all that is wanted for children by milder and wiser methods.

P. If death or other irreparable damage were to ensue from severity of treatment, would the legal authorities be sure to take cognizance of it ?

T. Unquestionably ; and punishment would follow. The party against whom the maltreatment was proved might be adjudged guilty of homicide, perhaps even of murder.

P. When you and I talk of bad acts we are of one mind ; we mean acts unfavourable to well-being. Among these are some so generally admitted to be destructive, and so really destructive to well-being, as to be forbidden by law—to constitute crimes. There are other acts, also, greatly disapproved as unfavourable to well-being, but for the repression of which it is not thought desirable to resort to the powers of law. Moreover, in thinking of these various acts, it is impossible not to be reminded of the many acts now considered harmless or even praiseworthy which were formerly condemned as criminal ; and of some acts formerly encouraged by the legislature, and committed by men held to be respectable, which are now forbidden as crimes. Let us have a few examples of each, if only to make sure that we shall afterwards be judging of the same class of acts.

T. Murders, burglaries, thefts, forgeries, and embezzle-

ments, may be taken as samples of acts destructive of well-being and forbidden as crimes, not only at this time and in this country, but in former times and other countries, with any pretensions to civilization.

Carelessness, recklessness, inattention in the discharge of duties, whether those self-imposed or those which attach to every member of society, cowardice or sluggishness in holding back from interference to save others from danger or calamity: these are examples of conduct which, in various degrees, bring down upon those guilty of them censure and disapprobation from society. But the legislature, fearing more harm than good from attempts at their prevention by law, has mostly abstained from constituting them crimes. Other penalties are attached to these acts so well known that we need do no more than just advert to them.

As instances of acts formerly held to be criminal or illegal, but illegal no longer, may be mentioned the avowal of opinions and convictions at variance with an established formula, the acceptance of more than five per cent. interest on loans of capital or money, the exportation of long wool and machinery, and the importation of India and China produce from any port on this side of the Cape of Good Hope and of Cape Horn, or in foreign vessels.

And as instances of acts now made criminal or discountenanced as unjustifiable and disgraceful, but formerly considered respectable, may be mentioned capturing and holding slaves, privateering, impressing, and duelling.

P. When society has resolved that certain acts, which it holds to be detrimental to well-being, must not be permitted, ought it to suspend its resolution in favour of individuals who plead, as a justification for committing them, conscience, or the will of God as interpreted by themselves, or any form of excuse grounded upon religion?

T. To do this would be tantamount to the suspension or abrogation of all law, so great would be the number of crimes committed for conscience sake, or in obedience to the Lord's

will, real or pretended, and the number of refusals to perform acts of social duty, on the plea of scruples of conscience, or of reluctance to offend the Majesty of Heaven ?

P. Are you not exaggerating ? Is it not recognized between us as a truth proved, or too plain to need proof, that a prevalence of respect for property and of reverence for law and order is, and must be, the foundation and support of the laws themselves ? How, then, where such a prevalence is to be found, could the suspension of law be followed by the widespread ill-conduct pointed to by you ?

T. We should say that respect for property and reverence for law and order prevailed widely, if ninety-five out of every hundred individuals were animated by these feelings. But to give licence to the remaining five would go far to destroy the well-being of the whole hundred. We are not aware that any plea can be admitted in justification for the intentional commission of acts pronounced to be criminal—that is, considered to be inconsistent with the welfare of society.

P. Do you also think that society in former days ought to have admitted no pleas in justification of the acts then considered criminal, but which have since been pronounced to be harmless or creditable ?

T. If we can point out how any former age could have separated its criminal acts into those really destructive of well-being and those erroneously thought to be so, our opinion is, not that pleas in justification of the latter acts ought to have been admitted, but that such pleas ought to have been unnecessary, since the acts should not have been classed among crimes. But if we cannot point out how unenlightened and misdirected men can separate one class of what they consider crimes from another—the real from the imaginary—we do not see how pleas in justification of acts pronounced criminal, rightly or wrongly, can be admitted. Their admission would be a virtual abandonment of law.

P. Does not the systematic refusal to admit such pleas seem to close some of the openings through which we might

hope to obtain the remission of barbarous punishments and the repeal or mitigation of bad laws?

T. The openings through which the execution of bad laws may be suspended, and their repeal arrived at, is the enlightenment of public opinion and of the legislature whence the laws have their origin.

P. Are the pleas of conscience in opposition to the declared will of society of as frequent occurrence at the present day as they used to be formerly?

T. We should say they are not. Our laws have gradually become less and less repugnant to the feelings of earnest and truthful men—the only class whose conscientious scruples present any real difficulty. The limits, besides, within which scruples of conscience ought to have scope are better understood. With rare exceptions, people's consciences lead them to believe, while it is open to them to use all their power of instructing and persuading society, so as to bring about a change of laws conceived to be bad, that laws ought to be obeyed so long as they are in force.

P. It will help to elucidate our subject if you can recall any of the cases where scruples of conscience are pleaded in justification of acts forbidden by law, or of refusals to perform acts enjoined by law.

T. We remember some years ago reading the account of a scene in a police court, where a husband had been summoned to answer to a charge for cruel treatment of his wife. Her statement was that she had long suffered, but that his treatment had at last become no longer bearable, and that her only hope of protection was in the magistrate, for her husband considered his treatment of her was simply the performance of his religious duty. The facts were clearly established, and the magistrate was on the point of passing sentence upon him, when his wife, relenting, interceded in his behalf. The magistrate, probably reflecting upon what might be the poor wife's condition during her husband's imprisonment, and glad to catch at any fair excuse for not involving her in her

husband's punishment, turned to the man and asked if he was willing to promise not to repeat his offence, intimating an intention to discharge him on his own recognizances to keep the peace towards his wife. The magistrate's humane intentions were frustrated, for the man refused to make the promise demanded of him, exclaiming, "Which am I to obey, the law of God or the law of man?" No resource was left to the magistrate but to sentence the man to imprisonment.*

* The following is extracted from *The Times* newspaper of 25th July, 1861:—

“MIDLAND CIRCUIT.—LINCOLN, JULY 24.

“(*Before Mr. Justice WILLES and a Special Jury.*)
“SIMPSON V. HALL.

“Mr. Macaulay, Q.C., Mr. Flowers, and Mr. Cave, appeared for the plaintiff. The defendant conducted his case in person.

“This was an action for libel published, and slanderous words spoken of the plaintiff by the defendant.

“The plaintiff is a clergyman, the incumbent of the chapel of Langrich and Thornton. The defendant is a hawker of tea and of tracts, a teacher and a preacher, and, as the learned counsel stated in his opening address, orderly, industrious, and respectable, with the exception of the uttering and publishing the slanders in question, which seemed to be founded on some strange delusion, as he must term it, although he desired to exercise the utmost forbearance towards the defendant in stating the case. It appeared that the defendant had some time previous to the spring of 1860 gone to various persons in Langrich, stating that a poor Wesleyan dressmaker who lived with her mother and received 2s. 6d. for weekly relief from the parish, was in the family-way by the plaintiff. He stated this to the board of guardians, who in consequence discontinued the relief; and subsequently stated that she had actually been delivered of a male child. A surgeon who had attended her on account of weakness under which she was labouring visited her for the purpose of ascertaining whether it were so, and was satisfied that she neither was in the family-way nor ever had been. He met the defendant and told him so. The defendant, however, persisted in it that she had had a male child, and went to the Willertons', where he insisted to both mother and daughter, that she had been delivered, and that Mr. Simpson was the father. These statements were mentioned to the plaintiff by a parishioner as having been said by a man who was evidently crazed, and of whose words no notice need be taken, but the plaintiff's brother hearing of the matter, wrote to the defendant asking what he meant by making such statements of his brother. The defendant replied that he did so because they were true. In consequence of this a meeting was held of the parishioners, at which an unanimous vote was passed reprobating the defendant's conduct. Thereupon the defendant wrote the letter containing the alleged libel, which referred to the same charge, and imputed to the plaintiff that he was not fit to exercise the office of a

When suicides have been committed under the so-called religious persuasion that early access to heaven would be obtained thereby, although the victims are beyond the reach of human censure, the tones of it are heard plainly enough by survivors. Parents, under similar delusions, have been known to destroy their children ; but the plea of insanity, not of religion, is alone capable of saving those who have committed the act from capital punishment.

P. Do you remember what attention was paid to the religious justification put forward by certain zealots who entered a place of worship of a Mormon congregation, and disturbed them in their devotions ?

T. We well remember : none at all. Although the magistrate had no liking for the Latter-day Saints, he did not the less protect them in the enjoyment of their legal rights, and punish those who, in the name of religion, invaded the rights of others.

P. Another class of religious enthusiasts will now and then exhibit themselves to the public gaze, and challenge the interference of the police, by obstructing the highway in their attempts to preach what they call the Gospel. How does the magistrate treat their defence ?

minister. The present action was consequently brought, and the plea which the defendant pleaded will sufficiently show with what sort of mind he had uttered these imputations. It was in these words :—

“ The defendant in his own proper person for a plea to the whole declaration says he is firmly convinced that it has been revealed to him by the Lord that the charges made against the plaintiff, as in the declaration alleged, are all true, and that the defendant spoke and wrote under the influence of that conviction, and not from malice.”

“ This plea was withdrawn on a suggestion by the Lord Chief Justice Cockburn that it was not issuable, and a plea of ‘ Not Guilty,’ and of the truth of the libel, entered.

“ The evidence of the plaintiff, of Charlotte Willerton, of the mother, and of the surgeon, entirely and completely negatived any improper connexion and the fact that Willerton had ever had a child.

“ The defendant was over and over again reminded by the learned judge of the groundlessness of the charges, and desired to consider whether he would not before verdict retract his statements and apologize. He seemed to labour still under an hallucination, and said he could not, although he declined to address the jury or call any witnesses.

“ The jury found a verdict for the plaintiff, with 100*l.* damages.”

T. A determination to preserve the peace, and the unobstructed right of way, is generally to be observed, combined with pity for the insensate though well-meant over-stepping of the law brought to his notice. The law of the land is the expressed will of society, and not at variance, it may be presumed, with the generally received interpretation of religion for the time being. The man who objects to the law, and dissents from the soundness of the religious interpretation, is not permitted to disobey as well as to dissent. He need not accept the office of magistrate or administrator of the law, or having accepted without due consideration, he may resign. But if he accept, and so long as he holds the office, he must administer the law as it is made for him.

P. Is obedience to the laws always insisted upon, whether those laws be good or bad, religious or irreligious ; and that, too, in the face of the numerous and remarkable repeals and revisions which we have witnessed ?

T. Obedience is always insisted upon, except where laws, instead of being altered in conformity with public opinion, are suffered to remain unexecuted, and become obsolete. So far as we can see, there is only one satisfactory mode of relief from bad or irreligious laws—their repeal or rectification. Laws unrepealed are not to be resisted by individuals, who may form their opinions, hold their opinions, and change their opinions, in opposition to the opinions of society, but must not act in opposition to its will.

P. Were there conflicts of religious opinion in the days when the right of succession to the throne was disputed ? and in what sense has the right of succession been decided ?

T. The “Divine right of kings,” to adopt the religious slang of past times, has been made to yield. The affections of the people are now held to be the basis of sovereign power, and the guarantee of its continuance. If the fact of the affections of the people, or the endurance of the people, while their affections, not yet estranged, are being undermined, be not a sufficient guarantee that the Sovereign reigns by the will of

God, an attempt at rebellion in the name of God, in opposition to the sovereign power, backed by those affections, or by a determination to endure, rather than to change, would be successfully resisted, unless the pretended will of God were combined with real superiority of force brought to bear from foreign parts.

P. We have already glanced at the conduct of the Quakers, whose wish it seems to be to set up religious scruples in opposition to the will of society as embodied in law. What do you say to the social phenomenon which they present to us for examination?

T. Their mode of asserting principle is rather adapted to excite our laughter than any deeper feeling. Lacking the intellectual vigour to form principles of conduct which can be acted upon, or the moral courage to stand by the principles which they adopt, they sneak out of difficulties which they will not relinquish, and cannot resist.

P. According to you, their so-called principles might be supposed to be a tissue of impracticable rules of conduct, and their career a series of subterfuges to escape from them. But are not you in a dilemma; for could such a sect have survived up to this time?

T. Impracticable tenets survive for a time by the aid of subterfuges. Quakers may not be worse than other sects. But their manufactory of principles, like that of the Latter-day Saints, being modern, and not shrouded in the darkness of antiquity, its founders, and the produce of their spiritual looms, have been thoroughly examined by a critical public; and the result has been, first, slow growth, and since, rapid decay.

P. In days happily gone by, we read of regicides and others, who were prepared to sacrifice themselves in order that vengeance might overtake those whom the powers of earth protected while sinning, as they thought, against God. How did society deal with them?

T. It showed unmistakably that assassination, on the plea of religion, would not be tolerated. The most excruciating

torture that human malignity could devise was inflicted upon the culprit before death was allowed to close his sufferings. Had the religious maniac been confined for life, or even simply put to death as a sacrifice required for the good of society, we should see nothing but another exemplification of the determination of society that no one shall be allowed to set up his reading of the Divine will against their own will as legally declared. Whereas the legal torture resorted to exposes the religious impotence of the torturers in trying to counterpoise the influence of the expectation of eternal happiness on the mind of their victim, by the temporal pain which, while they inflict on the rack, they pronounce from the pulpit to be comparatively insignificant.

P. After society has pronounced what conduct it will not permit, or, which is the same thing, what conduct is illegal, and has made plain, in the form of public opinion, what conduct, not forbidden by law, it looks upon with disapprobation, two characters of conduct in opposition to its will are recognizable: one, where the parties who set the wishes of society at defiance do so under the impression that they are acting wrong, although unable at the time to resist the temptation to transgress; the other, where the parties who set the will of society at defiance do so designedly, impelled by a sense of duty not unfrequently derived from their own peculiar notions of religion. Do we find that society shows any disposition to yield to either of these parties?

T. We do not. Neither do we see how society could exist unless obedience to its laws was insisted upon.

P. While society has been declaring its will, and insisting upon obedience to the expression of it in its laws, has it seen reason, from generation to generation, and from year to year, to discuss and consider many alterations submitted for its adoption, and to remodel both its laws and its opinions, so as almost to throw a halo of glory and sanctification over the victims who had been sacrificed to the maintenance of former laws?

T. It has; of that there can be no doubt,

P. And is society the worse for having so changed its laws ?

T. All the better. Many laws which were in force at the beginning of this century would now be considered intolerable by everybody.

P. We seem to have come to the admission that conduct conformable to the will of society must be enforced, while it is almost equally important that openings should be made to enable society to alter—to amend its will. We need but turn back a small number of pages in our history to be satisfied that we could ill afford to part even with some of the later changes in the will of society. And I should think that you must be among those who are hopeful of some further changes.

T. We rejoice in many of the changes that have been made, and are hopeful of others.

P. The question which I now submit for your consideration is : How is society to enforce obedience to its will, and at the same time not to exclude itself from any assistance by which desirable changes in its will may be effected ?

T. Submission to law being indispensable, the only opening for change must be through persuasion while obeying.

P. I do not see that objection can reasonably be taken to an inquiry which springs from so well-chosen a starting-point. Does your idea of persuasion include liberty of discussion and remonstrance in the fullest sense of those terms ?

T. In the fullest sense of those terms, submission to the laws, so long as they are unchanged, being understood.

P. You are aware that people cling to some of their laws with great tenacity, with an ardour of affection not by any means warranted by the goodness of the laws themselves, and that they are ill-prepared to brook remonstrance or any manifestation of a desire for change ?

T. That people are thus weak we admit. Of course we cannot but think that any inclination to stifle expressions of opinion as to the desirableness of change, or expositions of the

reasons for recommending change, or for urging upon others the expediency of acquiescence in change, would be a proof of insensibility to the danger of depriving society of all access to further improvement—a proof of ignorance and weakness in combination calling urgently for instruction and guidance. There is only one limitation that we can think of as at all desirable, and that can scarcely be called a limitation to the freedom of advocating and discussing new opinions—we mean that which might be imposed upon instigations to refuse obedience to existing laws.

P. Forcible expositions of the badness of a law and impassioned appeals for concurrence towards effecting its modification or repeal, may produce great bitterness of feeling, and yet not approach even to the appearance of an instigation to resist its execution. May not great mischief arise from granting licence to the expression of dissent and of desire for change while existing laws are clung to by a considerable portion of society with convulsive tenacity ?

T. When the intelligent minority, small but growing, of any community is beginning to awaken to the enormity of laws which inflict pains and penalties upon those who dissent from particular religious professions, which impose a state of slavery upon a class, which commit the power of governing and taxing the whole people to persons so circumstanced as to be irresistibly tempted to abuse their power, can we say that this intelligent minority ought to be debarred from using their powers of persuasion to bring the majority over to their views ? And if not, and the majority are irritable, indignant, and violent, ought the consequences of their violence to be charged to the intelligent minority who are doing their best to enlighten the ignorance of their countrymen in order to bring about an improvement in the laws ? Our only hope of ever being quit of paroxysms of violence is not through the vain attempt to suppress the introduction by the minority of the further light and truth for which there is so much need, but through the awakening and fostering of a desire among the majority to

listen to every new suggestion ; so that when, because it shocks prevailing opinion, favour is not to be expected, toleration may be relied upon.

P. If I do not misconstrue your sentiments, they tend to this conclusion. The conduct of individuals must be made so far to conform to the will of society, that nothing shall be done which is held to be hurtful to the general well-being, whether the will of society be conveyed in the form of law or by the manifestation of public opinion. But since experience has shown, over and over again, that society has been mistaken in its views, and has, happily, been induced to change them ; and as there is no reason for supposing that the limits of improvement have been reached, or that the need of rectification has passed away, a desire for freedom of discussion—nay, for more than freedom, for encouragement of discussion—ought to be universally cultivated, in conjunction with obedience to law and deference to public opinion in conduct.

T. This seems to us the state of mind most favourable to the present peace and future improvement of society.

P. Shall we now endeavour to test the strength with which society may be supposed to hold these opinions, or to cultivate this state of mind by citing instances from former days, when principles and doctrines to which it was deeply attached, have been controverted, and also instances where similar controversies are still proceeding ?

T. There ought not to be any objection to have opinions put to whatever test may be required to prove their soundness ; and we hope that the disposition to raise an objection of the kind is rapidly departing from us.

P. We may dismiss examples from the past, where sentence has been already pronounced, without much ceremony. Let us be content to cite the discussions which preceded the abolition of the slave-trade and of slavery, Catholic emancipation, the repeal of the test and corporation acts, the reform of parliament, and the removal of restrictions on trade. How were the first attempts to recommend these changes in our laws

received, and what do we think of those changes now that they have been made ?

T. They were received with very great ill-feeling, and resisted at every step with the utmost bitterness. We now glory in having made these changes, feel that we are deriving great benefit from them, and would not like to think that we could be led to treat those who might suggest and recommend similar beneficial changes to us, with the intolerance and vindictiveness so profusely showered upon the benefactors, to whose intelligence and devotedness we owe our being now in the enjoyment of the fruits of past changes.

P. From past changes of law, let us turn to past changes of opinion. What shall we say to the discussions which preceded revolutions of opinion concerning the shape of the earth, the causes of day and night and of eclipses ; the circulation of the blood, the causes of disease, and the means of preserving health ; the causes of thunder and lightning ; and the best methods of securing good conduct, and of preventing destitution, vice, and crime ?

T. However greatly we may feel beholden to the benefactors of mankind with whom these mighty changes—these inestimable contributions to human well-being—originated, we fear it must be admitted that most of them were condemned by their own generation as disturbers of the peace, unsettlers of opinion, uprooters of faith, enemies of religion, infidels, unbelievers, or ill-conditioned men under some epithet, drawn from the armoury of theological vituperations, indicative of the hatred or aversion of those who used it.

P. Ought not our knowledge of the errors of our fathers' ways to serve as a caution to us—while we excuse them for their inability to discern what we now see so clearly—not to repeat their mistakes in circumstances similar in principle, although altered in form ?

T. Certainly it ought. And there is evidence to justify our thinking that discussions are now conducted with greater consideration and forbearance than they were formerly.

P. In order to judge how far the desire for perfect freedom of discussion is cultivated and felt, should we try it in reference to some proposed change which society is more than half inclined to make, or to some change the adoption of which would imply a revolution as great as that which substituted Christianity for Druidism in these islands, or Mahomedanism for Christianity in Asia and Africa.

T. The greater the change proposed, the greater of course would be the trial of the love for freedom of discussion, and of the confidence in the fruits to be gathered in from it.

P. There are people in this country—I will hazard no conjecture as to their numbers or attainments—who think that theology and good government would both greatly gain by being kept perfectly distinct ; or, to use a familiar expression, by the separation of Church and State. Now, suppose some member of our House of Commons, by way of giving expression to his own opinion—and, as he believed, to an opinion, though latent, prevailing much more widely than was generally imagined—were to move a resolution that in future no bishoprics, livings, or benefices, in the gift of the Crown, as they became vacant should be filled up, the revenues liberated thereby to be appropriated to the better education of the people, to a religious duty too long neglected or indifferently performed. How do you think such a resolution would be received ?

T. We apprehend so ill-judging a member would receive little encouragement to repeat his motion.

P. But would he not, and ought he not, if convinced of the truth and soundness of his own views, to persevere as Wilberforce, Brougham, Romily, Hume, and Cobden persevered ; and if so, ought you to be prepared to stigmatise him as ill-judging, and to signify not only that you would oppose him because you could not concur in his opinions, but that you disapproved of his disturbing you in the enjoyment of your own unquestioned ?

T. You must acknowledge that there is some reason for our being startled by the improbability and boldness of the pro-

posal of any such resolution. On reflection, we admit that any member, however strange his conceptions of duty might appear to us, ought to meet with tolerance, if he do not command our respect, while conscientiously bent upon acting up to them.

P. I believe I am warranted in stating that very many thoughtful people reject as utterly false and incompatible with the Divine attributes the doctrine of eternal punishment. Their objection to a future state of never-ending torture commonly supposed to be in store for most of us in "Hell" does not rest upon the difficulty of assigning the place where this torture is to be endured, since it was ejected from the bowels of our own earth, but upon a difficulty which they find quite unsurmountable, because they see no escape from the surrender of Hell or of the goodness of God, and it is impossible for them to hesitate between the two. Ought these people to be stigmatised for holding their opinions, for avowing them, for promulgating them, for defending them?

T. Conformably to the conclusions which we have already arrived at, they ought to be approved and encouraged. But would they not create a dreadful turmoil?

P. In the same way that we have "religious difficulties" interposed to prevent the education of the people, I suppose we may have "religious turmoils" to silence discussion and smother freedom of thought. While many persons, after deep reflection, have come to the conclusion that a future state of rewards and punishments—that is, a promise of reward and a threat of punishment in a future state of existence—is utterly subversive of all rational conceptions of Divine wisdom and goodness, not only is the uttering these opinions met with widespread disapprobation, but in great emergencies it is attempted to extort from those who hold such opinions an avowal whereon to justify a denial of the protection supposed to be afforded by the law to every member of the community without distinction.

T. It is to be hoped that you are referring to some by-gone state of society. Treatment like this would be worse than a

denial of freedom of expression—it would be an attempt to suppress liberty of thought. Or if this were disputed, there could be no concealing the fact, that liberty of thought was only to be enjoyed on condition that they who ventured upon the luxurious indulgence should pay a penalty for arriving at conclusions obnoxious to law-makers, or evade the penalty by treating those who would inflict it as medical men treat children and lunatics.

P. If you were not so much absorbed as you are in your school-work, if you had time to notice events of daily occurrence all over the country, you might collect proofs in abundance of justice withheld from men too thoughtful to yield a blind assent to the opinions of others, and too conscientious to pretend to convictions which they do not feel. Burglars, swindlers, and embezzlers, escape because the victims whom they have robbed, or the witnesses on whose evidence their victims rely, cannot reconcile man's posthumous punishment with Divine goodness and wisdom. Could they but relinquish their belief in the latter, and imbibe, or pretend to have imbibed, a belief in the former, they would conciliate magisterial and judicial favour and protection.

T. We would fain hope that these evidences of magisterial and judicial blindness, lamentable as they are, are but the flickering reflections of the ignorance of former days, drawn forth from obsolete laws by interpreters better judges of the parchment on which they are engrossed, than of the spirit which ought to preside over their administration.

P. We must not omit to ask this question: Can a society which sanctions such practices, whether they be conformable to law or in defiance of it, be said to be impressed with the importance and the duty of doing all in its power to encourage freedom of expression as well as freedom of opinion?

T. A society which permits such proceedings has much to do before it can be entitled to claim for itself the character of a high regard for truthfulness. We can, however, readily understand the state of mind which persuades itself into the

conviction that a belief in a state of future rewards and punishments is a security for the truthfulness of witnesses.

P. And how do they who trust to the influence of this belief as a security for truthfulness certify to themselves that the profession of belief is accompanied by belief?

T. That appears to us to be the insuperable difficulty in the way of placing confidence in professions of belief.

P. Is there not also some difficulty in ascertaining whether the belief in a state of future rewards and punishments is favourable or otherwise to good conduct?

T. Hardly, as far as truthfulness is concerned.

P. How happens it, then, that the verdicts of juries can so often be more readily anticipated where questions of religion are involved, from a knowledge of the men in the box, all sworn to truthfulness, than from a knowledge of the merits of the case to be tried? Is there not reason to suspect that they who fancy they place reliance upon this state of belief in witnesses shut their eyes, or, more properly, are blinded to the fact that the avowal of a belief in posthumous rewards and punishments has been perfectly reconcilable with a propensity to perpetrate every conceivable act of malversation, profligacy, and peculation, legislative, magisterial, legal, judicial, and clerical, from which is by no means to be excluded the episcopal? Have the threats of Divine wrath, as dealt out from the mouths of divines, been always awarded according as men have deviated from truth and integrity, and from a proper sense of duty towards their fellow-creatures, more particularly towards defenceless children?

T. We pray that these reflections may ere long penetrate the minds of men clothed in ermine and purple, and in sacerdotal garments, white and black, thence to be diffused through all ranks of society.

P. Meanwhile the best hopes of society rest upon you. Tell me, if you were judges presiding in court, would you not be anxious to form as correct an opinion as possible of the trustworthiness of every witness who gave evidence before you?

and would you shut out any light that the diligence and acuteness of the counsel and attorneys could bring to bear upon a matter so all-important?

T. We should be sorry to omit availing ourselves of anything that could assist our judgments in estimating the evidence of every witness at its proper value. The film having been removed from our eyes, thanks to you, we are now able to see how dreadfully the sanction of the Divine government is misrepresented; how, under the names of "vengeance" and "eternal punishment," it is perverted to the most base and malignant purposes. We can no longer place any reliance upon belief in posthumous punishment as a security for truthfulness or any other species of good conduct. But even if we could continue to lean upon it, would a dishonest witness hesitate to turn our "foolish faith" against us? Would he not avow a belief which he did not feel, and laugh at our simplicity? More ignorant, from the peculiarity of our position, as judges of the characters of adults who come casually before us, than we are, in our capacity of schoolmasters, of the characters of the boys who are regularly with us, we dare not venture to speak with confidence as to what course is best adapted to guard against the untruthfulness of witnesses on all occasions. In spite of the absurd and culpable practices still persisted in, the main reliance for the truthfulness of a witness in our courts of law is, we conceive, the probability and consistency of his evidence, his bearing while giving it, the test of cross-examination, the absence or failure of any attempts by the adverse party to discredit his testimony, and lastly, the influence over his mind of the legal penalty which awaits the crime of perjury.

P. To which you are no longer disposed to add the fear of posthumous punishment?

T. Experience has shown the legislator that he cannot rely upon this fear to restrain bishops, those shining lights of Christianity, from making an irreligious use of their patronage, nor from imitating and abetting the "Dives class" in a course

of profuse and luxurious living, while multitudes of little children are pining from want of the bread of life in the midst of spiritual destitution. How, then, can he rely upon the beneficial influence of this fear over the minds of individuals of whose Christian training he can have little or no knowledge ?

P. Does a judge who, while he attaches weight to an avowal of belief in a state of future rewards and punishments, is not quite devoid of intelligence, dispense with the securities for truthfulness which you have mentioned ?

T. No. And if he were driven to surrender one set of his securities, the secular or the so-called religious, he would not hesitate to retain the former on which to rely exclusively.

P. What was passing through your minds when you alluded to the disadvantage of your supposed position as judges in regard to the character of men, compared with your actual position as schoolmasters in regard to the character of boys ?

T. As schoolmasters we have a full and prolonged view of the lives of our pupils by which to judge of them. Judges have but a one-sided and fleeting view, for a few minutes only, with such intensity of light as skill can throw upon it. And as conduct mainly flows from habits, a familiar acquaintance with habits is the best conceivable help for judging of character. If this be undisputed, attention to the formation of habits—particularly of the habit of reflecting upon the probable and certain consequences of conduct—must be the chief reliance for inducing conduct favourable to well-being.

P. And do you not think that belief in a state of future rewards and punishments, to be determined by conduct on earth, must operate most favourably upon the probable future conduct of your pupils ? Is it not desirable that, among other consequences of bad conduct, posthumous punishments should be pressed upon their consideration ?

T. One would think you were now contending that the influence for good over people's minds of hopes and fears concerning a future state of existence was indispensable, having

previously cautioned us that many good and intelligent men were unable to reconcile such a future state of existence with Divine goodness. Might not some of our pupils share in the religious views of these good and intelligent men? As it appears to us, the question which we have to decide is not whether the influence of future rewards and punishments is to be abandoned, but whether it is to be relied upon—whether the belief in it is sure to arise, and, if so, not only in appearance, but in reality—whether it is sure to act in furtherance of what society pronounces to be right conduct, and of the progressive rectification of society's misjudgments concerning conduct. Legislators, while they cling to the practice of invoking the co-operation of posthumous terrors, of attaching a stigma to those who are not under their influence, of encouraging the profession of a belief in their influence which is not felt, show their mistrust by visiting upon perjury every penalty that they think likely to prevent it, just as if there were no belief in posthumous punishment. We may profit by their example.

P. I think I gather from your answers that you cannot discover how any additional security is to be obtained for arriving at truth in courts of law, by attempting to repress freedom of thought, by attaching disgrace or disability to the avowal of opinions at variance with those generally accepted, or by holding out temptations for the profession of opinions, not according as they are felt to be true, but according as they are supposed to find favour?

T. We certainly think that the practice of rejecting evidence because the witness holds obnoxious opinions, is to impede rather than to promote justice, to impede rather than to promote truthfulness, and to impede rather than to promote knowledge, by encouraging the withholding of speculations leading to new discoveries, and of errors the publication of which is the first step towards their rectification.

P. If we have omitted nothing that ought materially to affect our judgment, the conclusion to which we arrive is, that restrictions to make individual conduct conform to prevailing notions of

what promotes well-being cannot be dispensed with, whereas no restriction should be imposed upon freedom of thought and expression, and that it should be sought to influence opinion in no other way than by instruction. Tolerance of opinion and expression is, in fact, quite as indispensable for the progress of society as intolerance of conduct is to its conservation.

T. Not forgetting what we have already agreed to, that different degrees of intolerance, tolerance, and approval ought to be apportioned to different kinds of conduct.

P. Let us now endeavour to form some estimate of the probable influence of views such as we have taken upon the tone and discipline of your schools. Do you think it would be desirable to encourage a tolerant spirit in regard to opinions and the avowal of them among schoolboys?

T. Most desirable. It is unnecessary to repeat that we ought to omit no effort in order to become acquainted with the state of mind—the trains of thought in our boys. We should rejoice to know these trains to be what we approved and desired, for their sakes. If we found them tinged with error, and likely to lead to bad consequences, our knowledge of them might enable us to take judicious measures for their rectification; whereas our ignorance of them would prevent our doing so. The success of our efforts to raise up in our boys a love of truth and a desire to seek for knowledge, which is truth, ought to put us at our ease as to the wisdom of cultivating in them candour of expression and tolerance for the expressions of others. At all events, we can think of no better course.

P. Your course, as you explain it, aims at securing candour and openness from your pupils in their intercourse with yourselves. You, as their physicians, would do nothing to lead them to conceal from you their ailments, lest you should be shut out from the opportunity of administering appropriate remedies. But in their intercourse with one another, might it not be said that unlimited tolerance of ex-

pression would be apt to degenerate into indifference to the use of coarse, obscene, and blasphemous language ?

T. Such language, unfortunately too common among schoolboys, even in the playgrounds of the sons of the wealthy, takes its rise from a fouler source—one far removed from habits of freedom and candour in giving utterance to inward thoughts. It arises from corruption within. Well-disposed boys would avoid companionship with others addicted to the use of such language, and would feel with us that, in shunning them, they were guilty of no intolerance of freedom of thought and of expression, but were simply marking their abhorrence of offensive utterances seldom disjoined from other manifestations of conduct which ought to be considered disreputable.

P. Few reasonable parents would, I think, fail to be satisfied with the distinction which you have drawn. Thoughtless or wilful people can alone confound errors of judgment and the avowals of them with the delusions and ravings of madmen, or with the nastiness and slang of the depraved. Schools are for the first, asylums for the second, and reformatories for the third. We need not waste our time upon people who are capable of classing heretics and unbelievers with thieves and murderers. Granting, then, that your pupils will, by your care, rise to the capacity of cultivating in themselves feelings of tolerance for those of their school-fellows who form and express erroneous opinions, while they turn with disgust from utterances indicative of depravity of disposition, do you not think that some pains ought to be taken to prevent the intolerance which it is desirable should be felt for some kinds of conduct, from extending itself to other kinds of conduct which ought to be tolerated or even honoured ? Is there no call for guarding against censoriousness of disposition, and the growth of feelings of dislike and antipathy undeserved by the objects of them, and destructive of the kindness and amiability which we all desire to see prevailing around us ?

T. You are putting us on our trial to ascertain how far we

have digested and assimilated all your teachings. If we are not mistaken, the pervading thought with us in education is to lead children first to inquire and learn how to distinguish between right and wrong, good and bad conduct, and then to co-operate with us in bending their wills and forming their dispositions to act in accordance with the dictates of their own judgments. Contemporaneously with instruction and discipline thus directed, feelings of intolerance, tolerance, and affection will attach themselves to others according as their various modes of conduct deserve to be classed as bad, indifferent, or good.

P. And is it not particularly desirable that the young should be brought to cultivate tolerance in regard to all those pursuits, bearings, manners, and tastes of individuals which cannot be shown to infringe upon the liberty of others, however eccentric or at variance with those generally prevalent they may appear to us?

T. Certainly. And again we say, we know no better method of preparing the young to respect the individuality of others and to claim the undisturbed enjoyment of their own, than to accustom them to apportion, not merely their praise and blame, but their sympathy and antipathy, according as they see good or bad predominating in conduct. Tolerance and respect for individual liberty could scarcely fail to be the feelings inspired by all the more numerous acts of life which neither deserve marks of affection and approbation on the one hand, nor of aversion and disapprobation on the other. Would that we, while striving to perform our duties to the young, could avoid that extreme of intolerance which tries to fix upon us the stigma of "unbelief"!

ON BELIEF, MISBELIEF, DISBELIEF, AND UNBELIEF.

P. I am concerned to see that you are still so much disturbed by the fear of being pointed at as unbelievers. If ignorant, superstitious, low-minded, base, or unmannered persons will throw out unintelligible, though meant to be damaging, imputations against us, should we on that account be prepared to part with any of those acquirements which are really the causes of our being obnoxious to the dislikes and reproaches of others who have them not? In the low state of civilization to which only men have as yet attained, the capacity of examining questions of morals and religion impartially and dispassionately is enjoyed by few. And to be able to form a just appreciation of the attributes of the Almighty; not to be committed to and bewildered by a mass of contradictions, to many of which habit renders man insensible, and from the whole of which relief, if obtainable at all, is only to be expected in the distant future; to be free from debasing fears and superstitions; to know a test of conduct by which to estimate the characters of men and nations, and to be above the mere animal propensity of fawning upon or snarling at others, according as they favour or thwart our plans and wishes—are not these luxuries for which we ought to endure some little inconvenience without repining?

T. We should be sorry to part with any of our acquirements. But it is hard that we may not be permitted to enjoy them in peace.

P. Like other men, you would have your enjoyments, if possible, free from alloy. But enjoyments unalloyed are not placed within our reach. The most that we can hope for is to reduce the quantity of alloy to its smallest proportions. At present you are in this state. You prefer to keep your acquirements, although they expose you to annoyances from fools and knaves, rather than be saved from persecution by abandoning your acquirements. Are you quite sure, however, that much of your agitation and uneasiness does not arise from exaggerated fears of the damage to which you are exposed ?

T. It is no slight matter for us to be thwarted in the performance of our duties, and to have our prospects of advancement destroyed, to say nothing of the slights and disfavour which we encounter.

P. May you not draw comfort from the reflection that you will not be summoned, as in times of old, to endure martyrdom ? Will not a little discretion, some watchfulness not to intrude unwelcome discussion, and to resist the temptation to engage in controversy where duty does not imperatively demand it, turn aside much of the injury which you think you have reason to apprehend ?

T. May be. Discretion and vigilance are great safeguards. But it is no easy matter to cultivate independence of thought, and to escape being suspected of unbelief ; and to be suspected is to be condemned.

P. To be suspected and condemned will be grievous or otherwise according to the character of the parties who suspect and condemn, and to the acts of which we are suspected. The praise of some people is more damaging than their blame ; and we might be condemned for acts in which we glory. If independence of judgment be the privilege of but a few, and you are among those few, ought you to repine at the tax which is levied upon your privilege, or to rejoice at being admitted to participate in the privilege, subject as it is to taxation ?

T. We ought to rejoice to be among the few who are subject

to taxation, while we exert ourselves to obtain relief by enlightening the ignorant, who are our task-masters. Apart from what you seem to think our unreasonable susceptibility, we may expect that the imputation of unbelief will bring with it diminution and insecurity of income, which we must provide against by extra economy. We must pay for the privilege of independent thought, as we pay for protection to person and property and for bread. It ought to be tax-free: and the tax levied upon it is one of those which ought to be repealed, because it benefits nobody. But we quite agree with you that till it is repealed they who pay it have the consolation of knowing themselves to be better off than the unfortunates who suffer the pains of ignorance and superstition.

P. We may now proceed to examine calmly and deliberately the nature of the evil of which you complain. You are suffering from an imputation arising out of the ignorance of others. While you suffer, you feel that you would rather endure the imputation than share the ignorance which inflicts it. Nevertheless, you would gladly be rid of it. Is relief obtainable, and if so, by what means?

T. Our only hope of procuring relief from evils inflicted through ignorance, must be by removing the ignorance.

P. Efforts to remove the ignorance which causes any particular evil, in order to be effective, require to be directed against that particular ignorance, and not left to make war against ignorance in general. The evil of which you have to complain is an imputation—the imputation of unbelief attached by ignorance to your intellectual acquirements. Can you tell me what is meant by “unbelief”?

T. The nearest approach to an answer that we can make to your question is, “an absence of belief in certain doctrines which are believed by those who cast the imputation, and which, they maintain, all ought to believe.” Of course, we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that the believers in one set of doctrines will thereby earn the character of “unbelieving dogs” from those who believe in another set.

P. Does not this impose upon us the duty of inquiring what is meant by "belief"? Is it the same as knowledge? Or when do people feel most confident, when they say "they believe," or when they say "they know"?

T. In common discourse we apprehend that the expression "to know" is used when certainty is felt; "to believe" when the feeling is somewhat short of certainty. We know that we are sitting together, that we are living in London, surrounded by other beings like ourselves. We know that other parts of the world were inhabited up to the latest time that we had intelligence from those parts; and we believe that they continue to be inhabited up to this time, although a calamity similar to that which overwhelmed Mendoza may have intervened to prove that we are mistaken in our belief. We know, also, what the appearances of the moon, the lengths of the day, and the varying positions of the planets, are owing to.

P. Is not the word "belief" on solemn occasions used to give expression to convictions quite as strong as, if not stronger than, those indicated by the word "knowledge"?

T. Belief in God, in the Saviour, in the Holy Ghost, in the immortality of the soul, in a future state of rewards and punishments, is meant to express strength of conviction no less remote from doubt than knowledge itself.

P. A word which at one time suggests doubt, and at another time gives expression to convictions more deeply seated than any obtainable by knowledge, ought to be examined with care. A slovenly or reckless application of such a word to subjects the most sacred cannot but be disgraceful, if it be not worse. Some preparation for a conscientious and satisfactory use of it in concerns of the greatest moment may be obtained by observing how we use it in more trivial concerns. Does the farmer who has gathered in an abundant harvest believe that he has done so?

T. Of course he does. But we would rather say that he knows it.

P. When, a little before harvest, he observes all the signs of a good crop, does he believe in its coming?

T. He might so express himself. We would say, he expects a good crop, feels certain of it, provided unfavourable weather do not intervene to destroy it.

P. And when the shipowner sees his vessel enter port and exchanges greetings with his captain, does he believe in her arrival?

T. Again we would say he knows it.

P. A short time before her actual arrival, knowing her steam-power and the length of her previous voyages, does he believe she will arrive on a certain day?

T. He expects that she will, although he knows that accidents might possibly prevent her arrival.

P. Suppose his vessel to be outward bound—say to Calcutta. In anticipation of letters by the overland mail, her loss or arrival is telegraphed; does he believe the intelligence?

T. He may or may not. He might know that the intelligence was false, because from other sources he had learned that his vessel was elsewhere—had put into some intermediate port, and could not possibly be where the telegram reported her to be arrived or lost.

P. If he had no such intelligence independent of the telegram, and believed the telegraphic message, but afterwards learned that it was erroneous, what would you say of his belief?

T. That he was mistaken in his belief—that he believed in error.

P. After such an occurrence, would he be as ready to believe a similar telegraphic message another time?

T. Possibly not. He might be more cautious; he might suspend his belief till the message was confirmed, thinking it very improbable, nevertheless, that such a mistake would be repeated.

P. When the mail arrives, bringing letters from his captain and agents communicating the event, does he then believe it?

T. After this confirmation, we should say, he knows it.

P. Could he both believe and disbelieve the event communicated through the telegraph?

T. No. He might do either, or he might be undecided: he might doubt.

P. Could he believe the arrival without disbelieving the loss?

T. Clearly not. Belief must always imply disbelief. As to affirm necessitates denial.

P. Do ordinarily well-informed people believe the earth to be globular, that it rotates on its axis, and that, accompanied by the moon, it pursues its course round the sun?

T. They know it, and believe besides, that these motions will continue as heretofore.

P. Do they believe that the moon and the planets are inhabited?

T. They neither believe nor disbelieve it. They suspect that, if they are inhabited, the beings capable of living in them must differ greatly from terrestrial animals in their organization. The variety of conditions in which it has been discovered that life can be sustained ought to prevent our affirming that life might not be sustained in circumstances new or unknown to us.

P. Astronomers think that they discern the existence of mountains and valleys in the moon. Do they pretend to tell us anything about that portion of the moon which is never turned towards the earth?

T. Not to our knowledge. The best informed among men readily confess that there are many things of which they are ignorant.

P. Whether we use the word "believe," or the word "know," to give expression to our convictions, is it always implied that we deny that which is inconsistent with our affirmation?

T. It cannot be otherwise. To say that the earth rotates is to deny that it is immovable. To say that the ship is in port is to deny that it is lost. To say that the harvest is abundant,

is to deny that it is deficient. To believe the one is to disbelieve the other.

P. And would you not disbelieve him who pretended to tell you that the moon was inhabited?

T. Unquestionably, because we know that he has no means of ascertaining whether the moon be inhabited; and if so loose a talker deserved so much attention, we could easily make him admit to us, if not to himself, that he was indulging in silly chatter. Nevertheless, because we declined to believe in him, to accept his statements independently of proof, we would not affirm that what he stated without proof might not be true. Our state of mind in regard to the inhabitants of the moon would be one neither of belief nor of disbelief, but of unbelief.

P. And what may we prefix to belief in order to designate the state of mind of those who believe an event to have occurred which has not occurred, or who believe that the sun goes round the earth, or that the changes of the moon occasion the changes of the weather?

T. We should call their state one of misbelief.*

P. Pursuing our inquiry into the varieties of conduct, particularly of man to man and to society, are we justified in pronouncing that we believe some kinds of conduct to be good and others to be bad?

T. Of many kinds we think we might say with propriety that we know them to be good or bad.

P. To avoid slipping, through inadvertence, into admissions

* "THE ARM OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST.—The commission charged to carry back to Barcelona the right arm of St. John the Baptist left this city yesterday. This remarkable relic had been taken from Barcelona, to which place it belongs, to the oratory of the Queen, and the happy accouchment of her Majesty is ascribed to its influence. This holy relic was the object of great veneration on the part of the pious persons of Madrid all the time it was exposed in the church of San Francisco el Grande. The nuns were not deprived of the privilege of adoring it, the venerable Prior Commissioner, accompanied by three members of his order, having presented the precious treasure in each of the twenty-eight chapels of the convents of this capital.—*Madrid Gazette.*"—*Times* newspaper, 1st Aug. 1861.

which you will not be able to sustain, will you furnish an example of both kinds of conduct ?

T. To learn and labour truly to get one's own living, to be just in all one's dealings, to be careful in undertaking duties and entering into engagements, and scrupulous in fulfilling them, are examples of conduct which we should not hesitate to say we know to be good. And to yield to idle, drunken, dishonest courses, to ill-treat or neglect one's own children, to connive at child-neglect generally, to accept trusts, offices, or appointments, especially with emoluments attached, and religious duties assigned to them, conscious of the inability to perform what is required, or careless of anything beyond enjoying the income, we should no less hesitate to characterize as conduct which we know to be bad.

P. If you made use of the word "believe," would it be to indicate a feeling on your part short of knowledge ?

T. Certainly not. Left to our own choice we should say "know." If asked whether we believed those two kinds of conduct to be respectively good and bad, we should answer yes, meaning that we knew them to be so.

P. When the men who practise these two kinds of conduct are brought to our notice, might we say that we believe them to be respectively good and bad men ?

T. We do not see why we should not.

P. And might we say we know them to be good and bad respectively ?

T. We think some distinction must be drawn. When we call men good or bad, we ought not only to mean that we know their past conduct to have been good or bad, but that we believe their future conduct will correspond with their past. Besides, we can never be quite sure that we are fully acquainted with the whole of any man's conduct.

P. Belief is here stopping short of knowledge, to assume the form of probability. Are there any means of measuring the number of degrees by which probability stops short of certainty, belief of knowledge ?

T. The deviations may be so small as to be scarcely perceptible, or they may be so great as to make belief approach to disbelief. Our information concerning a man's long course of conduct might make us feel sure that he could not be guilty of a bad act in future, or that he could scarcely fail to commit one, were the opportunity presented to him. Between these extremes, our expectations of future conduct would be governed by our knowledge of former conduct and of the strength of the temptations to which those whom we would judge might be exposed.

P. Do these considerations incline you to retract your admission that there are men whom you believe to be good, and others whom you believe to be bad ?

T. No : although we thank you for putting us through this examination. Our belief in character, our only reliance for belief in future conduct, must necessarily be tinged with shades of doubt, however faint they may be.

P. Does your appreciation of the character of some men appear to justify you to yourselves in saying that you believe them to be good men ?

T. It does. It would make us say that we all but know for certain that they are good, and will continue to be good.

P. Wherein would your belief in the goodness of God differ from your belief in the goodness of the best of men ?

T. In two respects. To believe in the goodness of God is to believe in the perfection of goodness, of which the best of men will always fall short. And our belief is divested of that shade of uncertainty ever attaching to belief in the continuity of man's goodness.

P. If I were to bring to your knowledge that some man whom you believed to be good had committed numerous acts of iniquity, cunningly concealed both from his victims and the public, what effect would that knowledge produce upon your belief ?

T. It would make us feel that we had been deceived in his character, and that the belief based upon it must depart.

P. Would your belief in a man's goodness, however great the number of those who fawned upon him, be shaken by a knowledge that he had countenanced and abetted the slaughter and plunder, imprisonment and expatriation, of thousands of his own countrymen ?

T. Surely there is no call for such a question !

P. Bear with me awhile. I have little doubt about your answer. But I wish to carry with me more than your tacit acquiescence, I want an expression of your conviction, strengthened with respect, affection, and veneration, or with disgust, abhorrence, and indignation, according as the acts and character which we have to believe in may call for either. How would your belief in a man's goodness stand the shock of your learning, that while he was surreptitiously filching from his countrymen, he openly exhorted and armed them to plunder others who trusted in them ?

T. Our belief in his goodness would make way for belief in his wickedness.

P. Would it be possible for you to retain a belief in the goodness of such a man, while fully persuaded of the truth of the slaughter, spoliation, peculation, and other abominations, with which he was charged ?

T. Certainly not.

P. And if you were to hear of certain of his adulators, who praised his goodness, and at the same time confessed to a knowledge of acts which you would consider enormities, and even approved and justified them ?

T. We should look upon him as a monster, and upon his adulators as cringing cowards, or as meaning by "goodness" a collection of qualities very different from that to which we should apply the name "goodness."

P. Then, supposing a man in whose goodness you believed, in the strongest sense of the term, were charged with a number of heinous offences, would you either refuse to listen to the imputations, or withdraw your belief in his goodness ?

T. If the imputations were no more than oft-repeated

slanders, the offspring of ignorance, ferocity, and baseness, we would give no heed to them. If they were brought forward for the first time, and by parties whose characters entitled them to a hearing, we should consider it a duty to ask for the proofs, and subject them to a searching investigation, feeling it impossible to love and venerate a man of whose character for goodness the faintest doubt or suspicion could rise up within us.

P. Before you resigned yourselves unreservedly to a belief in any man's goodness, would you not require some evidence of the state of his belief ?

T. We should consider that we had obtained that evidence in his previous life and demeanour.

P. But if he avowed his disbelief in rewards and punishments to be awarded after death, according to conduct in this life, would not that of itself shake your belief in his goodness ?

T. Greatly as we might differ from him, we do not see why his disbelief should damage his character for goodness in our eyes. He might believe, as we have heard many do, that the infliction of pain after death, especially if prolonged to all eternity, is inconsistent and irreconcilable with Divine goodness.

P. You are doubtless aware that you are strongly at variance with much of the prevailing opinion around you. If the good man in whom you seem disposed to place implicit confidence, were to tender his evidence in a court of law, it would be rejected.

T. You do not wish to deter us from forming our own convictions by the exercise of such reasoning power as we are blessed with, and then giving expression to them, by reminding us that county magistrates and judges at quarter-sessions cling to regulations and practices handed down to them from barbarous times ?

P. You are right in supposing that I would not deter you from examining and judging for yourselves. And the more solemn the subject, the more solemn the duty of so doing. But do not conceal from yourselves the greatness of the autho-

rity which you dissent from. You will find the metropolitan Rhadamanthus,* as well as the provincial Midas, allowing a witness to be questioned upon the state of his belief, and refusing to receive his evidence, if he acknowledge his unbelief, or express disbelief in post-mortem torments.

T. Thieves, swindlers, and adulterers, might escape punishment through such a law of evidence ; and the property and characters of men, of whom nothing worse could be said than that they are mistaken in their opinions, may be placed at the mercy of the vilest in society. If the only two witnesses who could prove a murder, were one who scrupled to kiss the Bible and take an oath, because the practice was irreconcilable with the injunction, " Swear not at all ; " and another who disbelieved in Hell, are you quite sure that Rhadamanthus would connive at the murderer's escape ?

P. Possibly he would try to overbear the scruples of the first by threats of legal penalties ; and the judicial mind has not always been incapable of sending forth imputations against the latter.

T. We must not, however, hastily conclude that these denials of justice, these licences to crime, which cannot be of frequent occurrence, are the only fruits of belief in post-mortem torments by law-makers and judges. They may consider justice to be so greatly fortified by this belief that the hardship inflicted upon a few unfortunate and mistaken men, and the impunity granted to a few atrocious villains, however much to be lamented, must be endured for the sake of the greater good.

P. Can we feel sure of this greater good ? Can we feel

* 5th March, 1861.

"COURT FOR DIVORCE AND MATRIMONIAL CAUSES.

"(*Before the Judge Ordinary.*)

"A man, named Robert Roberts, was put into the box, but before he was sworn he was asked by Mr. Sergeant Wheeler whether he believed in a future state of rewards and punishments. He declined to answer the question, and was not allowed to give evidence."—*Times* newspaper, 6th March, 1861.

that law-makers and judges believe in the influence for truth and goodness of post-mortem rewards and punishments ?

T. They speak and act as if they did.

P. Which law-makers should you say believed most implicitly in the efficacy of the terrors of Hell over the minds of witnesses, those who attached legal penalties to the commission of perjury, or those who did not ?

T. Those who did not.

P. Do you know of any countries in which reliance is exclusively placed upon the influence of post-mortem punishments over the minds of witnesses, to deter them from perjury ?

T. We must bear in mind that law-makers, while they insist upon a belief in Hell, can get at no more than an expression of belief, while belief itself may not be felt. All conceivable precautions are, therefore, taken to secure truthfulness in witnesses. Cross-examination and threats of legal penalties are brought to bear upon witnesses, who might attempt to impose upon judge and jury, under the shelter of a belief which they profess, but do not entertain.

P. Is it supposed that most false witnesses are unbelievers ?

T. We never heard that affirmed. Believers are occasionally exposed to temptation beyond their strength.

P. We are in the same predicament as law-makers. We cannot feel quite sure of more than the expression of belief. I will ask, therefore, in which class of unbelievers—of those who avowed unbelief, or of those who professed belief,—would you expect to find the larger number of false-witnesses ?

T. In the class of those who professed belief. And, accordingly, we could not help preferring the testimony of those who avowed their unbelief to the testimony of those who pretended to believe. Before we placed reliance on the testimony of either, we should like to be informed of the probability of the events to which they testified, and of their previous characters, as far as ascertainable.

P. You would not be able to concur with our law-makers and judges in their choice of means for securing reliable

evidence to guide judicial decision or official selection for appointments of trust.

T. We could no more concur with them than they seem able to concur with themselves. Their expressions of belief are wider than the belief of which they give proof in conduct. And they wilfully deprive themselves of the testimony of those unbelievers of whose conscientiousness they have the strongest evidence, while they are confessedly impotent to exclude others from the witness-box.

P. May they not be doing still greater mischief? May they not be placing a conscientious witness in this perplexing position? It is known to the counsel on both sides that upon his evidence the decision must turn—whether a widow and fatherless children are to be plundered of their property, or the fair fame of a woman, up to that time without reproach, is to be blasted. “Do you believe in a state of future rewards and punishments?” asks the high-toned Christian advocate engaged on the side of the villain who has been prompted in his villainy by the expectation that the evidence of the only witness who could foil him would not be received. Shall this unbelieving witness say no—the truth—and thus connive at the plundering of the widow and fatherless children, and at enabling a libertine to blast a woman’s fame; or shall he say yes, and by his lie save the helpless and the innocent from the pitfall prepared for them by the legislature, and into which the judge is ready to conduct them, with all the parade of justice?

T. A witness of the *non mi ricordo* stamp on the opposite side never fails in readiness to confess to any belief required of him, including belief in the remission of the sins which he is bent on committing.

P. There is another question which well deserves the attention of law-makers, and also of teachers. Does the belief in the continuance of life after death always conduce to good conduct on earth?

T. If the state of future existence be believed to be one of

happiness or misery, according to conduct on earth, that belief must surely conduce to good conduct on earth.

P. I suppose you mean—provided the estimate in the minds of believers of what will be considered conduct deserving of post-mortem happiness or misery by the Great Dispenser of future rewards and punishments, coincide with conduct which tends to promote general well-being? I was reading the other day of the slaughter of two thousand men and women at the funeral of an African king. It would have been thought indecorous for his majesty to make his entrance into the abodes of bliss without a numerous retinue. Do you think that belief in a post-mortem existence for evermore, the happiness of which is to be secured by such means, is more favourable to earthly well-being than unbelief in the prolongation of life after death?

T. We do not know that it has ever been pretended by Christians that belief in a future state of existence, severed from belief in Christ, was favourable to morality or conduct promotive of well-being on earth. One of the great arguments in support of the Christian religion is, that we have no justification for belief in the immortality of the soul, except through the gospel of Christ; and where a vague expectation of a future state of existence is to be found among heathens, that state is but a prolongation of the barbarous practices and vicious indulgences which constitute their conceptions of earthly happiness.

P. May I note it down as your opinion that a belief in a dispensation of rewards to be enjoyed, and punishments to be endured for evermore, will be favourable or unfavourable to earthly well-being, according to the conceptions of the rewards and punishments, and to the characteristics of the conduct for which they are to be awarded?

T. To dissent from that would be to express indifference or disregard for the morality inculcated in the gospels. No Christian, we imagine, would look for human improvement through a belief in eternal happiness derived from quaffing

blood or spirits out of the skulls of enemies slain in battle, or from gloating over their bleeding scalps dangling from one's girdle, or from the lascivious pleasures of the Harem—a happiness enlivened and set off by the sounds of the distant groans and shrieks of those who are suffering torture without intermission and without end.

P. When our legislators and judges reject the evidence of witnesses who do not believe in a life hereafter, wherein rewards and punishments are to be awarded according to conduct on earth, are they not abandoning, or refusing to accept, as they are ordinarily interpreted, some of what are held to be fundamental doctrines of Christianity?

T. We think that their absolute rejection of any evidence is injudicious. We can conceive no better course than that of trusting judges and juries to put their own value upon the evidence tendered for their acceptance under the legal penalties attaching to perjury. But it does not appear to us that our legislators, and our judges acting as legislators, derogate from their Christian character because they think differently.

P. Must we not admit that reliance upon the influence over a witness's mind of his belief in posthumous rewards and punishments ought to be proportioned to his conception of the certainty with which the rewards and punishments will be awarded?

T. So far as a witness might hope to escape the penalties, the possibility of which he believed in, so far also would the fear of those penalties be an untrustworthy security for his truthfulness.

P. If, then, a witness who might be tempted to perjure himself did not believe in the atonement and remission of sins, while he believed in posthumous punishment and the impossibility of escape from it, would he not be a much more reliable witness according to the views of our legislators and judges?

T. We don't see how we can avoid answering that question in the affirmative.

P. And are we not almost forced to suspect that our legisla-

tors and judges hold more by a future state of rewards and punishments than they hold by the atonement and remission of sins ? more by the old than the new law ? more by that part of their religion which is common to all religions than by that which is peculiarly Christian ? and ought they not to ascertain that witnesses attach as little weight as they apparently do to the doctrine of salvation through Christ ?

T. You have fairly puzzled us.

P. When to this unchristian custom of relying, or pretending to rely, upon a belief in post-mortem rewards and punishments as a check upon the mendacious propensity of witnesses, is added that of accepting a counterfeit for the genuine belief, the profession for the reality, one might wonder how a Christian judge of intelligence and integrity can preserve his gravity or smother his indignation while he administers the law according to the letter. One would also rejoice to see more activity, more zeal, more sense of dignity, more evidence of sincerity in the efforts of judges to procure those changes which would make the laws more conducive to the improvement of general morality, and the administration of them less repulsive to honourable men.

T. You must give us time to think over these, to us novel and startling objections to a method of treating witnesses, which has been so long in force.

P. There are yet other considerations which ought not to be lost sight of. Does it matter what notions Christians form concerning the future state of existence which awaits them, and concerning the kinds of conduct which are likely to entitle them to enter the abodes of everlasting bliss, or to consign them to torture without end ?

T. Certainly ; and yet we must not presume to arrogate to ourselves a foreknowledge of the judgments of our Heavenly Father, nor must we lack faith in the intercession of our blessed Redeemer.

P. But a belief in a life hereafter, the enjoyments and sufferings in which are to be irrespective of earthly conduct, could

exercise no influence for good over that conduct. And how can our law-makers and judges escape being chargeable with some such arrogance when they pronounce what will befall perjured witnesses in the life to come ?

T. Without pretending to lay down the rule by which the Almighty will be guided in dispensing future rewards and punishments, or to dive into the innermost secrets of the hearts of men, we may confidently affirm that the good will be rewarded, and that the bad will be punished.

P. And does not this throw us back upon the question which we have so often discussed together ? Are not men's conceptions of good and bad perpetually on the shift ? Have we not passed in review a sufficient number of their reversals of judgment concerning right and wrong to convince us that if the interpretation of the Divine will could be accepted from man, the saints and sinners, the blessed and the damned, of different epochs would present to us a somewhat confused medley, little in accordance with the modern improved notions of right and wrong, good and bad, and still less with the unerring judgment of Infinite Wisdom ?

T. These considerations ought to inspire us with the desire of perfecting ourselves in the knowledge of right and wrong, and of rising to a faint conception of that unerring judgment with which God will be pleased to distribute rewards and punishments in the life to come.

P. I have not yet been able to ascertain very clearly how far you think the belief in a dispensation of rewards and punishments in a state of existence after death is favourable to good conduct, and hence to well-being, during life on earth ?

T. We have never before been subjected to such searching examination. We admit the inability which we feel to collect and arrange our thoughts, and to meet the numerous difficulties which you suggest. But we cannot hesitate to say that a belief in future rewards and punishments, in addition to those experienced during our brief period of life on earth, and to be dis-

pensed according as they are deserved, must strengthen the other securities which are taken for temporal good conduct and well-being.

P. And as Almighty wisdom and goodness cannot fail to dispense rewards and punishments according to that rule, it only remains for us to ascertain how far man's belief has, up to this time, coincided, or approached to coincidence, with the Divine standard. Have we any reason to suppose that the chief actors, in the massacres and wars, and the unrelenting persecutions recorded in the history of almost every age, were haunted by a belief of the never-ending torments which awaited them?

T. How they were haunted we cannot say. They do not appear to have been deterred by their belief from committing what we now hold to have been most atrocious crimes.

P. If earnestness of belief might be depended upon in any quarter, it would be among those whose lives are supposed to be devoted to the impressing of their belief upon others. A few years ago the legislature felt itself driven to interpose its control over funds left at the disposal of the bishops for spiritual purposes, so shockingly did those funds appear to be misappropriated. Enormous revenues are still trusted to them. How do they repay the confidence placed in them by their fellow-men? How do they seem to be affected by the hope of reward and by the fear of punishment, when they will be summoned before the throne of their Divine Master? The terrible state of spiritual destitution in every diocese is proclaimed by themselves. There are thousands upon thousands, according to their own lamentations, who for lack of instruction "do not know God." Are the reverend fathers in God, in the fear of His judgment and in the hope of His favour, foregoing every luxury, and even mortifying the flesh, so as to scrape together the means of supplying this spiritual destitution, and of making God known to all? or do they live in palaces, clothe sumptuously, feed luxuriously, frequent the mansions and tables of the great, trusting that their Saviour will intercede to screen them

from that everlasting punishment, unbelief in which, according to them, is so heinous a sin ? Or is their belief an expression—an utterance to impose upon others—not an inward faith unmistakably manifested in their conduct ?

T. We are at a loss to answer you.

P. Let us turn to the terrestrial judge upon the terrestrial judgment seat. How does his belief in rewards and punishments to be dispensed by his Heavenly Master in a life to come, influence his conduct in administering justice as a means of promoting earthly well-being ? A juryman is summoned who declines to stifle his conscientious scruples and to desecrate the Bible while he kisses it. The judge commits him to prison or fines him. A witness steps into the box ; he declines to affirm, in answer to the question put to him for the purpose of causing his evidence to be rejected, that he believes in a future state of rewards and punishments, and he is ordered to stand aside, and, may be, allow a triumph to fraud and injustice. On another occasion, after an atrocious criminal—a murderer—has been convicted, and the sentence of death, supposed by those who uphold it to be the most efficacious of the means for the prevention of crime, has been pronounced, the very same judge recommends the convict to make his peace with God, meaning thereby, if that recommendation be not a solemn mockery, that his crimes have not necessarily excluded him from the joys of heaven.

T. It almost looks as if legislators and judges, who persist in the exclusion of witnesses who avow their unbelief in a future state of rewards and punishments, ought also to object to witnesses who believe in the atonement and remission of sins, since the hope of forgiveness and remission might undermine the regard for truth in giving evidence built upon the belief in future rewards and punishments.

P. The extent to which belief in the atonement and remission of sins has been carried—witness the sale of indulgences in Catholic countries, and the assurances given by Protestant divines at the foot of the gallows—has awakened a feeling of

fear in some minds lest the efficacy of belief in future rewards and punishments should be on the wane. One can readily conceive, on the other hand, that many men occupying elevated positions in society, if they believe in a state of future rewards and punishments to be administered to them according to their deserts, would be very reluctant to abandon their belief in the remission of sins.

T. You have given us much to think over. We must confess that the contradiction between a reliance on the influence of a belief in future rewards and punishments to deter men from committing bad acts, and the doctrine of the atonement, had never occurred to us. We see clearly enough that these solemn and mysterious portions of our religion have been handled so as to impart no lustre to the intelligence or to the piety of our judges and divines. They give utterance to their belief first in one and then in the other, in such a way as to make it difficult to understand how they can believe in both, and to lead some people to entertain very serious doubts whether they believe in either.

P. We ought not to take leave of this subject without trying to put together the results of our reflections. "To believe" and "to know" are sometimes used as convertible terms, and at other times in different senses. Again, "to believe" is used, at one time, to express certainty of conviction, and at another no more than expectation approaching to certainty. It is also used to denote conviction based upon proof, beyond the reach of proof, and in opposition to proof. What are the resources within our reach for detecting the meaning of the word "belief" when it is used in treating on important subjects, to be misled in which is to incur the danger of becoming the victim of some vile superstition palmed upon ignorance under the name of religion?

T. The only resource that we are aware of is a careful attention to the signification of the word whenever it comes before us, in receiving and making communications, or in examining our own thoughts.

P. How would you determine when "to believe" was synonymous with "to know?"

T. By examining whether the matter believed was within the circle of things demonstrable. If it were, we cannot but think that it would be advisable to discard the expression "to believe" on such occasions, employing the words "to know" when we wish to designate things proved and things disproved.

P. How would you determine when to employ the term "to believe" in matters undemonstrable?

T. When we wish to express the state of our minds in regard to matters supernatural, such as "God," "the creation of the world out of nothing," "the existence of the soul when separated from the body," we say, "we believe." If we were told that the planets are inhabited, or that the creatures living in the moon had, like ourselves, been blessed with a revelation, we could not say that we disbelieved or believed the contrary, because these are not impossibilities. Our state would be simply one of "unbelief." But if we were told that God was angry, capricious, cruel, revengeful, delighting to goad man on against man, we should repudiate such fables as inconsistent with the Divine goodness and wisdom, in which we do believe. Without sinning against reason and probabilities, we may believe such a God to be the creation of men yet steeped in ignorance, the slaves of superstitious terrors, and delighting in slaughter and rapine.

P. Might it not be objected, It is not for you to judge of God's ways; man's ways are not His ways? and what you rightly call vile, hateful, or contemptible in man, would not necessarily be so in the Lord of all hearts and the Ruler of all men?

T. We should simply answer to such objectors, that it is our duty to guard our minds against these or any other representations of the Deity which we conceived to be derogatory to His high attributes; and that their attempts to shake our faith in those high attributes made us disbelieve in their fitness

to explain which were and which were not God's ways, or to make known where it became us to believe or to disbelieve, or where to remain in suspense between the two—in unbelief. Upon one point we could feel no doubt; we prefer to believe in the goodness of God without reservation, rather than in their attempts to make the revolting acceptable, or to obliterate the distinctions between good and bad, by pretending that vileness ceases to be vile if imputed to the Almighty.

P. Can you lay down any general rules by observing which conscientious people may be assisted to distinguish where belief in the supernatural may be granted, where it may be withheld, and where it must be refused?

T. You will excuse our hesitation in answering this question. We must ask you to accept the expression of what we would rather call our present leaning than our matured opinion. We may believe in the supernatural when it is not in opposition to reason; we may withhold our belief in it when, although not directly opposed to reason, it more resembles the vain imagination of man than the inspiration of God; and we must refuse our belief in the supernatural when it is opposed to reason. There is one test—a test accessible to all who will cultivate their understandings—by which the true revelations of God may be distinguished from the many spurious revelations and the disfigurements of the true current in the world: Are they or are they not, while above and beyond the limited range, the feeble grasp of human reason, perfectly in accordance with it as far as it does reach, satisfying its aspirations for truth and goodness, while opening beyond the glorious vista of that sublime truthfulness and that perfect goodness possible only to God Himself?

P. Might it not be inferred, from what you have been saying, that religion, contrary to the very general persuasion, is liable to suffer more from believers than either from unbelievers or disbelievers?

T. An ignorant and superstitious man is always more to be feared when arguing in favour of a good cause than in oppo-

sition to it. The overthrow of his absurdities may be mistaken for the overthrow of the cause to which he had attached his absurdities. A believer who identifies with his religion the atrocities, contradictions, and profligacies imposed upon him in conjunction with it, and clings to them as essential parts of it, refusing frantically to listen to persuasion or remonstrances, is one of its most dangerous enemies. He obstructs those who would deliver their religion from the monstrosities with which it is disfigured, and would disperse the clouds and mists which prevent its shining forth in all its glory. The credulous man who passes for a Christian, inflicts as much injury upon Christianity intellectually, as the bad man who shelters his iniquities under the same sacred name, inflicts upon it morally.

P. I should be acting unfairly if I did not invite your attention to the extraordinary discrepancy between your views and those of one of our eminent church dignitaries, as to the relative damage likely to be inflicted upon religion by credulous believers and intelligent inquirers. He says, of certain controverted interpretations of Scripture, that they must not be supposed even to be "open questions and fair subjects for discussion between Christians, still less between Church of England men."* Do you know of any question which ought not to be considered by every man before he surrenders his belief to it, or objections to which ought to stir him to anger after he has surrendered ?

T. His belief in any doctrine would be of little worth if he had not first withheld it ; and he ought to mistrust his own mastery of the grounds of his belief, if unable to listen with calmness and decorum, nay, with respect, to the reasons put forth by others for wishing to modify the doctrines which he believes in, as a condition of accepting them.

P. What do you think of this dignitary, when he says of those who start objections to previously received interpretations of doctrine, that their "difficulties are to be set at rest in any

* *Replies to "Essays and Reviews,"* with a preface by the Lord Bishop of Oxford. Oxford and London: John Henry and James Parker. 1862. p. iv.

mind rather by strengthening the deep foundations of the faith than by the laboured refutation of every separate, captious, and casuistic objection, [in which repugnance to all fixed belief of dogmas, as having been directly communicated by God to man, is wont to vent itself] ? *

T. We marvel at his presumption in daring to arrogate to himself the right of imposing his doctrines on others, hiding his pretensions, we suppose, under the plea that he is a constituted interpreter of revelation.

P. But does not his holy office confer some such privilege, or, as he would say, duty upon him ?

T. We thought that in this country, at least, the right of interpretation was now admitted to belong to each individual—to be an inalienable right.

P. Do you acknowledge no ecclesiastical authority ?

T. Not over people's consciences.

P. Are you not propounding a doctrine which, in the present dearth of instruction, must leave vast numbers of people to wander in darkness ?

T. The dangers to which people are exposed through being left in darkness may be guarded against by enlightenment. We know of no security against the benumbing and degrading action of the subjection of conscience to priestly domination. Priestly domination must be kept off. If the clergy would devote their influence and energy to the enlightenment of the people, they would find their authority more respected. Authority need not be claimed—it will be ungrudgingly acknowledged where service is rendered and duties are faithfully performed.

P. I cannot see that any provision is made by you for spiritual authority in matters of belief.

T. If by spiritual authority you mean power over the consciences of others, except through persuasion and instruction and the influence of piety, of kindness of demeanour, and of conduct, we confess that we have made no provision.

P. Have you not omitted to make allowance for "our

* *Idem*, p. iv.

limited faculties" which, according to the dignitary already cited, make open questions dangerous? Do you not fear with him that our limited faculties might be unequal to the task of closing "open questions"?

T. History supplies more examples of human degradation and suffering occasioned by questions kept closed and unsolved by "limited faculties" than by questions opened and kept open till their solution could be accomplished; and of all limited faculties, those of ecclesiastics have not been the least conspicuously active in en chaining human intellect.

P. Our dignitary might be troubled to answer your "objection," although he would not hesitate to call it "casuistic," and he will continue to insist upon obedience from the "lower orders" of his clergy.

T. And to obedience, in one sense, he will be entitled. But if he claim, through his "casuistic" interpretation of obedience, to domineer over their belief, his authority ought to be resisted.

P. I do not know whether you are alive to the difficulties which your notions, if acted upon, would place in the way of all Church government.

T. Possibly we are not. It must be left to the authorities of each church so to shape their rules of government as to make them assist in promoting, not in obstructing, the spread of intelligence, truthfulness and religion. And it will be well for them to understand that ecclesiastical authority partakes no more of divine authority than any other, and confers no right to domineer over belief. Hence it must remain with each clergyman under this authority to decide for himself whether his own belief is reconcilable with abiding in the Church or whether it necessitates his secession.

P. Another question suggests itself to me here. If we were summoned to surrender our belief, not according to the impression made upon us by evidence and reason, but in obedience to the dictates of authority: which, among all the authorities claiming our obedience, would you surrender to?

T. To the most reasonable.

P. You are not answering my question ; for you say you would yield to reason, when I am asking how you would decide if appealed to by authority independently of reason.

T. We must then confess our inability to answer.

P. If two authorities were to claim your belief and obedience, the representatives of one being well paid for recommending their "articles," and the representatives of the other being liable to contumely and deprivation for recommending theirs : towards which would you feel more powerfully attracted ?

T. Towards the latter, of course. Reason, however, again, would have much to do even in that. But we should wish to examine the "articles" for ourselves.

P. In other words, you wish to have a "reason for the faith that is in you." I must yet mention another fact, which, perhaps, will have some weight with you. This dignitary announces that he has commended the effort to crush those who question the exposition of "belief" by which he abides, to the prayers of the Church ; and it may be fairly presumed that he has thrown the weight of his own prayers into the same scale.

T. Before we could say what deviations from reason ought to be admitted on these grounds, we must know what prayers were offered, as they doubtless must have been, on the other side. It is said that, in war, God favours those who possess the best weapons, and know best how to handle them. In controversy, also, may be, He favours the rifled barrel of reason more than the smooth bore of dogma. The efficacy of prayer, as a substitute for reason, has been well illustrated in the person of Joseph Smith, the father of Mormonism. Bewildered by the eminent divines who preached the Gospel to him, searching for truth, and unable to find it with their help, and mistrusting his "limited faculties," he retired into the woods to pray. According to him, the Lord listened to his prayers, and not only assisted him to a satisfactory interpretation of Scripture, but also gifted him with inspiration. Later in his career, when other inspired men made their appearance, and

their inspirations were not always compatible with his own, he cautioned his followers that it was sometimes difficult to distinguish between the inspirations of God and those of the "Evil One." His method of solving the difficulty was convenient, if not original. Your ecclesiastical dignitary might be thought to have been educated in his school, so perfect is the resemblance between the two. "For," said Joseph Smith, "mine is the true inspiration; mine, therefore, is from God: and all inspirations that do not conform to mine must be from the 'Evil One.' "

ON THEOLOGICO-INTELLIGENCE.
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T. As the disadvantages under which we have laboured from the very commencement of our intellectual training are well known to you, our ignorance, or more properly, the state of misapprehension and misdirection in which you found us, cannot have taken you by surprise. But it is a matter of wonder to us that the questions raised by you, palpable as they now appear, should never have been presented to us before. Our instructors, we are confident, could not wilfully have kept us in the dark on matters of deep interest, not only to us, but to the children whom we were destined to teach. And yet it is difficult to imagine that they should have been in the dark themselves; for they, and still more the higher authorities who appointed them, were cultivated men—men upon whose education no pains had been spared, and the development of whose intelligence may be supposed to have been aided by the best lights of the age in which they were born. How, then, do you account for our having been allowed to lose ourselves in the labyrinth, out of which we trust that you have at last extricated us?

P. According to my habit, I would rather assist you to answer this question for yourselves. Let me ask: if you had lived in the days of Locke or Newton, and the general education of the people had then been thought of, would your trainers or those who appointed them, have attempted to imbue you with the doctrines of those illustrious men, or with the doctrines which they were superseding?

T. Of course, not with the new doctrines.

P. Would they have brought the new doctrines to your notice, and have given you the opportunity of weighing the evidence by which each—both the new and the old—were supported, and of then electing between them for yourselves ?

T. Most probably not.

P. Would not the supposed trainers of those times, and the men in authority who appointed them, have been among the highly educated of their day ?

T. That also, we suppose, can hardly be doubted.

P. It appears, then, that to be highly educated, according to any standard of excellence hitherto accepted, perhaps according to any possible standard, is not a perfect security against misdirection.

T. Time, we presume, must be allowed for the spread of new ideas, even among the best educated.

P. Can you form any notion as to the length of time which ought to elapse before truths newly brought to light will be so far received among the highly educated, as that all teachers under their control will be qualified to impart them in their turn to the children ?

T. We must admit our inability to answer that question.

P. As the question is one of considerable importance, especially in regard to the truths which bear directly upon the welfare of the people, we ought not lightly to give it up as unsolvable. We may inquire : what is meant by a highly-educated man ?

T. One who has been put in the way of mastering the knowledge and acquirements of his age, allowance being made for the absence of those special attainments which must be confined to particular classes and professions.

P. As the acquisition of the knowledge and attainments up to any given time does not carry with it the future knowledge and attainments that the progress of the age may bring forth, the rapid and general diffusion of which may be most desirable ; how do we find those reputed to be highly educated compare with others in the readiness with which they accept, and in the

zeal with which they promulgate and teach the new truths presented to them ?

T. The more the mind is enlarged by education, the greater must be its aptitude to investigate new phenomena, and to receive new truths ; and it may be expected that zeal in communicating the benefit of them to others would not be lessened by increase of intelligence.

P. Is it certain that what you call enlargement of mind is always to be found in conjunction with quantity of knowledge, or must the quality of the knowledge be taken into account also ? Do we not find that the world is indebted for many of its great discoveries, and for the zeal with which they have been promulgated, to men excluded from the ranks of the learned ?

T. We certainly do. But was it their want of learning that enabled them to confer such obligations upon us ; or were they able to confer them upon us in spite of their want of learning ?

P. We may safely say the latter. But this admission still leaves to be settled what that is which is wanted in the learned to qualify them to be foremost in discovering and diffusing useful truths, and what that is in the unlearned which confers this distinction upon them.

T. We must look to you to point out what that is which is needful to raise the learned, who are so much above the unlearned in some respects, to a level with them in others.

P. I am far from thinking that I shall be able to satisfy you ; but the subject is worth inquiring into, even if it is beyond our power to clear it up. Some part of this apparent and undesirable disparagement of what is included under the names of education and learning, may originate in a confused and mistaken use of those terms. Run over in your minds the qualifications which, in your opinion, entitle a man to take rank among educated and learned men.

T. We suppose that this rank would be denied to no man who was an accomplished classical scholar, who kept up the learning of which distinguished university honours were both

the stamp and the promise, and who, besides, was well read in modern literature, that of foreign countries included.

P. Would accomplishments like these be possible with a very limited and superficial knowledge both of physical and social science?

T. They would; but the capacity, matured by the acquisition of such attainments, would remove all doubts as to their possessors being able, in case of need, to master other attainments, and being free from all that narrowness which disinclines from the examination and study of the novelties presented for that purpose by the ordinary current of events.

P. An educated and learned man, in the common acceptance of the terms, will mean a man well versed in literature, ancient and modern, and I will add, besides, what does not always accompany this knowledge, familiar with the ideas, manners, and transactions treated of in that literature. We shall, then, know this much of him: that he has considerable powers of application, and that he has been in the habit of mastering what he applies himself to; that, as part of his classical entertainments, he is familiar with the ideas as well as the literature of the ancients, and that with his modern literature is united familiarity with the topics generally handled by literary men. What will you know or infer from all this of his readiness to inquire into new suggestions, and of his sagacity in detecting their merits or demerits?

T. We can hardly be expected to infer much more than that he will most likely surpass, in all these respects, less or ill educated men.

P. Suppose the new suggestion bore upon a chemical subject, what would your expectation be of him, as compared with an accomplished chemist?

T. The chemist, of course, would take a more lively interest in any subject connected with his own science, and be more likely to investigate it to good purpose.

P. Would your answer be similar, if the suggestion bore upon physiology, upon astronomy, upon mechanics, or upon

any other department of knowledge which involved the necessity of tracing cause and effect, and of selecting and using the appropriate means to ends, for the purpose of making the observations and experiments requisite for establishing that connection ?

T. It would. We perceive that you incline to have the attention of the young more directed than it has hitherto been to science.

P. You compel me to caution you again. You really ought not to be perpetually on the watch to ascertain whither my inclinations may lead me. They may lead me astray ; but they need not for that reason mislead you. Your leanings may be in that direction. Or they may have been in an opposite direction, and you are beginning to suspect misdirection. But, because my questions disturb your feelings of security, do not conclude that when you waver on one side, I incline to the other. A new suggestion, destined to change the face of the earth, has been made within our recollection by George Stephenson. Was it welcomed more heartily by engineers than by scholars, by men of science than by men of letters ?

T. It is said that he was opposed by the whole corps of scientific engineers.

P. And how did it fare with the suggestions of Harvey and Jenner ? Did they derive their support from scientific men, *i. e.* from the men presumed to be scientific in their own professions, or from those continually forthcoming vigorous and intelligent recruits out of the masses not yet immovably tied down to the knowledge or science, call it which you will, so far accepted ?

T. Having first shaken us, you are now making us oscillate.

P. If after being shaken out of repose in error, and set oscillating in doubt, you should gravitate towards a course of inquiry that will lead you to convictions for which you can give satisfactory reasons, you will forgive my having disturbed

you. I must draw your attention to another phenomenon exhibited to the world by men of science. Are you not aware that men of wide reputation for eminence in special sciences have been victims of the most childish superstitions, enchain'd by the wildest of obsolete prejudices, and bamboozled and befooled by impostors who rival professed conjurors in everything except their skill and plain-dealing ?

T. We are ; and yet we cannot bring ourselves to think that either literary or scientific attainments tend to disincline men to listen to new suggestions, or to unfit them for investigating and accepting what of truth such suggestions may contain.

P. I don't know why you should make any effort for the purpose. It would interest me greatly, and perhaps it might interest you also, to ascertain whether there is any process which literary and scientific men have been put through that disinclines them to look at suggestions apparently subversive of some of their established convictions ; from which process men not regularly trained to literature or science may have escaped. Can you think of any ?

T. You are taking us out of our depth.

P. I may possibly be out of my own also. Let us try in another direction. You are, doubtless, acquainted with many men who have obtained diplomas, and who have passed examinations with similar success according to the examiners' reports. Do they all stand equally high in your estimation, either for the solidity of their attainments, or for the ardour with which they are trying to perfect them ?

T. Certainly not. Some of the men, we are confident, did little more than cram for their examinations. Others pursued their studies with ardour for the sake of the knowledge and self-improvement which they were intent upon, going through the ordeal of examination as a passport to enter upon their professions. Men of the latter stamp are found to stand lower than some of their cramming competitors in the examiner's reports ; but they soon go a-head in life.

P. Granting equality according to some standard of literary and scientific attainments, but inequality as regards ardour for truth and self-improvement, where should you expect to find greater readiness to consider and appreciate new suggestions?

T. Among those, of course, who were superior in zeal for truth and self-improvement.

P. Supposing these latter to be greatly inferior in literary and scientific knowledge, should you expect that they will be also inferior in readiness to consider and appreciate new suggestions as stepping-stones to new truths and self-improvement?

T. On the contrary, we should expect that superiority of zeal for self-improvement would more than compensate for considerable inferiority in the amount of knowledge actually in possession.

P. To revert to the different influence upon the understanding and the disposition between literary and scientific studies, the one having to do with language and the other with the connection of cause and effect in phenomena; which, in your opinion, would most predispose students to welcome and investigate new suggestions?

T. Scientific studies; for a student cannot engage in them without having phenomena new to him, and perhaps to the world, forced upon him: whereas the student of classical literature is essentially buried in the past, and the student of modern literature is not likely to be tempted far into the future. But we must not forget, with every wish to lead youth to engage in scientific studies, that great authorities hold that literary studies ought to take precedence. Literature, they say, is better fitted than science to the juvenile capacity; and profound scholarship—for that is the name given to high attainments in literature—is the best preparation both for the performance of professional duties and for mastering the difficulties of science.

P. I have heard this notion frequently propounded, and would gladly consider any evidence vouchsafed in support of

it. Good scholars and university men keep repeating it. But the rapid and wide development of scientific truths of late years is sweeping this with other unwarranted assumptions into the obsolete past. An ex-judge, in imitation of Canute of old, was valiantly placing himself not long ago, in opposition to the current. If the question were to be determined by authority, and the object of classical attainments was to produce a judge distinguished for a rigorous administration of the law as he found it, without a useful thought for its amendment, a strenuous leaner upon precedents, whether favourable or not to the progress of society, and a determined opponent of every reform that might be wrung during his career from those who held hard by what had been handed down to them, as regardless of new and improved thoughts as handloom weavers were of the overwhelming power of steam: in that case the superior efficacy of literature in forming the mind is not to be doubted. But a question such as this is not to be settled by authority, least of all by that of a mind formed through a long course of deference to authority and precedents, any dawning disposition to original inquiry having been stifled in classical literature. Neither you nor I can lay claim to much scholarship, but does your experience lead you to think that knowledge of language is better and more easily attained through objects and ideas, or independently of them?

T. Some of us have tried both ways. Among us there is now but one opinion—that instruction in objects and phenomena should proceed *pari passu* with, if it do not take the lead of, instruction in language, with a view even to literary attainments alone.

P. Would this opinion be strengthened, if your wish were to qualify your pupils for grappling with the realities of life—matters known, and matters to be learned?

T. Certainly it would.

P. Would extra literary attainments be dearly purchased by the sacrifice of any portion of these latter qualifications?

T. We should say at a frightful price.

P. Does it not, to say the least, admit sufficiently of doubt to deserve very serious consideration, whether that exclusive straining after literary cultivation does not tend to disincline for the examination of new suggestions, thoughts, and manifestations, the sources whence all further progress must emanate?

T. We are strongly of opinion that to pursue such a course with the young is most reprehensible, and must impede that increase and spread of knowledge which it is the duty of everybody to promote.

P. If these considerations were to obtain weight, and lead to a greater attention to scientific, in combination with literary attainments, we should still have to inquire whether there has been any peculiarity in the method of imparting instruction, which can have led men called scientific, to oppose fiercely, as worthless novelties, some of the noblest contributions to science. You know how fond I am of so conducting lessons as to lead pupils to make for themselves the discoveries which have already been made by others, to prove what they accept as truths, to disprove what they reject as errors. Do you think, if instruction were always conveyed, when possible, in that manner, the practice of presenting successive items of knowledge as truths to be accepted without question being avoided, that any advance would be made towards producing a readiness, or preventing a disinclination to attend to new suggestions, and to seek for evidence of what of truth or error might be lurking in them?

T. We can hardly suppose that any teachers would dissent from your opinion, that it is desirable to lead pupils to observe, to examine, to weigh evidence for and against, to adopt conclusions, and then to test them; in other words, to give pupils those helps which their teachers' superiority places at their disposal to make their own discoveries. The process of making discoveries must leave the understanding in a more healthy state to deal with future new suggestions, than that of accepting discoveries ready made. The objection to this pro-

cess, they will say, is its tediousness, its difficulty, its all but impracticability. •

P. May not every particle of this objection originate in deficiency of teaching power? You have talked of a cram for literary honours. May there not also be a cram for the scientific? And may not the end of both be a sense of repletion, an absence of appetite for further acquirements, a want of relish for intellectual exercise, a lethargic dislike of all intruders upon those who are perfectly satisfied, confined within a small circle of knowledge, unconscious of the wider expanse from which they are self-excluded?

T. Giving the fullest weight to all your reflections upon the method of conducting education—particularly that which is regarded as superior education—you appear to us to have failed in accounting for the inveterate dislike which is felt both to your proposed exclusion of the Bible from schools, and to your methods of instruction.

P. If this inveterate dislike be as strong as you represent, and as I apprehend it to be, may it not originate partly in moral, and not wholly in intellectual causes?

T. We do not know how they can be entirely separated. Increase of knowledge brings with it change of judgment; and is not that a new moral cause?

P. Certainly; and my language requires to be corrected. My thoughts, just now, in drawing a distinction between intellectual and moral causes, were fixed upon those exercises of the intellect which are directed to the physical sciences. I would not even say that moral causes are entirely severed from them. But I was leaving aside those exercises of the intellect which are turned upon the moral and social sciences—upon the causes and consequences of human conduct. Intellectual and moral causes in that branch of study are indeed inseparable. You have recognized the superior influence upon the understanding of actively discovering over passively receiving a scientific truth. Would the first method of acquiring a moral truth also exercise a superior influence?

T. Even more strongly. The experience which we have so far gained in teaching our own children, has impressed us deeply with the beneficial consequences of this mode of teaching moral truths, or rather of leading the children to learn them.

P. As our object just now is to account for the reluctance to listen to new suggestions, and even to admit the possibility of extracting moral truths and considerations, hitherto unthought of, out of them, I will ask whether a knowledge of the distinctions between right and wrong, just and unjust, true and false, pious and impious, is supposed to be imparted at our universities?

T. Even to us you ought not to put a question in a form, which if it were put to the University authorities, would be considered an insult. There can be no doubt that those distinctions are specially meant to be taught there, whatever we may think of their method of teaching. The students who are destined for holy orders, are they not also destined to disseminate this knowledge throughout the land?

P. We now have the subject of our inquiry well before us. How are the most carefully educated, and particularly our future clergy, taught the distinctions between right and wrong, just and unjust, true and false, good and bad, pious and impious? Are they, under capable guidance, invited to inquire, and to discover for themselves some test by which they may be helped to draw these distinctions, or are they partly commanded, partly encouraged by example and advice, to accept these distinctions ready drawn for them by others?

T. We are not aware that the practice of searching for the foundation of the distinction between right and wrong, is at all cultivated in our universities. We can only speak from hearsay. Our impression is that students there are expected to receive moral and religious precepts unquestioned, are cautioned against much questioning, and that their acquirements in what goes by the name of moral philosophy are estimated by the accuracy and retentiveness of their memories applied to the

contents of books—to what other people have pronounced to be sound doctrine.

P. May I record it as your opinion, that the examiners and judges of university proficiency in moral philosophy are more intent upon ascertaining that students have acquired the ability to reproduce other people's thoughts, than that they have acquired any thoughts of their own useful to possess or creditable to produce?

T. Our impression certainly is that the studies of the young men at our universities are conducted more with a view to qualify them to reproduce doctrines ready prepared for them, and to explain and justify those doctrines by prearranged arguments and proofs held to be sufficient, rather than to produce doctrines made their own by careful study and selection, to state the grounds on which they have adopted those doctrines in preference to many others, and to answer the objections that might be plausibly urged against them.

P. Is not the application of such a test likely to lead to what you call a *cram*—a *cram* morally, as well as a *cram* intellectually?

T. We don't see our way to defend the practice, or to understand how students can escape damage from it.

P. As far as instruction in morals and religion is concerned, it would be an injustice to our universities to suppose that more than ordinary pains are not taken to give their theological students the full benefit of it. If from the method of imparting instruction in morals, we turn to the examination of its results, we can look to no quarter so appropriately as to the clerical. In our earlier conversations we referred to some of the extraordinary reversals of judgment that have occurred within the century upon the kinds of conduct which ought to be sanctioned or otherwise. How have the clergy figured in regard to these great national and moral improvements?

T. As a rule, they do not profess to put themselves forward. We don't know on what principle they conduct their teaching. They are conspicuous for their activity and devotion in chari-

table works. That merit is due to them. But their teaching seems to be as far removed as possible from rules of conduct applicable to the everyday work of life.

P. This, of itself, is not a commendable result of University instruction. But when they have taken a part, and the bishops by their position are compelled to do so, have they been forward or backward in promoting all those changes which are now unanimously admitted to be improvements—substitutions of the better for the worser judgment, of truth for error, of right for wrong?

T. They have the reputation of having been backward; and we cannot prove that they do not deserve it.

P. Even if this reputation or imputation be undeserved, is it not sad that it should be afloat, whether owing to popular ignorance, or to the over-modesty on the part of the clergy, which keeps them back from claiming a reputation more in harmony with their merits?

T. We wish they would get rid of their over-modesty, if that alone stands in the way of their disproving so odious an imputation.

P. But if there be some foundation for the character which they have earned, swelled into undue proportions, as will happen when people are kept in the dark, the real proportions of a character attached to so important a body as our most prominently placed instructors must interest us deeply. Ought we not to be anxious—to be almost deprived of peace of mind, till convinced that we had spared no pains in order to ascertain the causes which lead to a disposition, if not to obstruct, certainly to hang back from promoting progress? Can theological studies, as they are pursued, in any way favour the idea that new developments are not to be expected; that it is wrong even to look for them?

T. We should say that they did, so far as students are confined within certain limits of inquiry, or, if that be an incorrect mode of stating the practice, are tied down to arrive at certain conclusions after inquiry.

P. I have often wondered that professors of theology should inflict these cramping conditions upon their pupils. Have they less faith than teachers of science in the truth of what they teach, or less confidence in their teaching power?

T. They would admit neither. The rule imposed upon theological students arises out of the very nature of the subject to be learned—the Scriptures; in which there has been, and can be, no change.

P. Are the professors and students of theology, and the professors and students of science, differently circumstanced in reality, or only in appearance? You say that the Scriptures are unchanged and unchangeable. Is this more true of the Scriptures than of the order of nature—of the laws of the universe and of its component parts, the foundation and material of all science? Does any body pretend that they have changed?

T. They may not actually have changed; but to men's eyes and hands they have changed, and greatly too. Since the Scriptures were vouchsafed to man, the universe and all its parts are to man as if they had been remodelled.

P. And yet the structure of the universe and of all its parts is unchanged?

T. If we did not know you so well, we should think you a little captious. The foundation and material of science, as you term them, are unchanged; but men through successive ages, by observation, experiment, and reflection, have become acquainted with so many particulars previously unknown to them, that the world of their forefathers may almost be said to have given place to a new world.

P. And in what state of mind, in regard to this new world, are modern men of science? Do they think they have reached the limits of what can be learned of it?

T. They would smile at our simplicity if we were to put such a question to them.

P. Am I wrong in concluding that you agree with me thus

far: that students of theology and students of science are similarly circumstanced in this respect—that the foundation and material for their studies are, so far as they know, unchanged and unchangeable? Briefly expressed, the "word" is the subject to be studied by one, the "world" by the other: each what it was in the beginning; each destined, so far as we know, to continue as it is and has been to the end.

T. Are not some of the discoveries made by geologists a little at variance with a statement so generally expressed?

P. I never heard it maintained, remarkable as may have been the changes in the arrangements and combinations of the elementary substances of which the earth is constituted, that the elements themselves are different. There are no truths connected with chemistry, electricity, astronomy, &c., that the masters of those sciences would not be prepared to say have held good within the period recorded in history. To guard against the chances of error suggested by your question, shall we limit ourselves to saying that the "word" and the "world," as subjects of study, have undergone no change since the commencement of the Christian era, and that they are accepted for purposes of study as unchangeable?

T. As all the researches of scientific men proceed upon the assumption of an established order of nature, we cannot object to start from this position.

P. Let us now inquire how the two classes of subjects included respectively in the "word" and the "world," so similar as to their presenting unchanged and unchanging matter for investigation, are treated by students. The students of the "world," you say, would smile at my simplicity, if I intimated a doubt whether they thought they had any thing more to learn. How is it with the students of the "word"?

T. They are also busily engaged in making themselves acquainted with their branch of study.

P. We will grant that both classes of students are equally earnest and equally industrious. How do they respectively prosecute their work? Are the students of science busily

engaged in ascertaining what the fathers of science thought and said hundreds of years ago, learning ancient languages in order to read their lucubrations in the original, tacitly assuming that all the knowledge which they can hope to acquire is only to be drawn from those ancient sources ? or are their thoughts principally bent upon turning to account each advance in knowledge beyond that made by their predecessors, to use it as a power by which to discover something more, with the conviction strong upon them that the mine of discoveries yet to be explored is inexhaustible ?

T. There can be no doubt that the state of mind, and the method of proceeding based upon it, with students of science, is not only that they know much more than their forefathers, but that their children and children's children for many generations are destined, by continual searching, to heap acquirement upon acquirement.

P. Will you now tell me what students in theology are doing ?

T. We suppose it must be admitted that they are doing the very reverse of these things. They recognize that they have in the Scriptures a mine of spiritual knowledge. But they have no notion of striking any new guiding light out of it. It would be considered dangerous, if not sinful, to make the attempt. At all events, it is discouraged. There are the Scriptures. Students have to learn what is in them. The mastery of the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew languages will enable them to compare the originals with the translations ; and they may study what divines and others who have established a reputation for piety and learning have considered them to contain. They may then repeat and promulgate what they have learned, provided it be certified by the authorities of their own days to correspond with the doctrine received in the past.

P. Before I ask what difference of effects must be produced on the understandings and feelings of two classes of students who pursue so very different a course in their studies, I will

put the matter in another point of view. It is difficult and important enough to deserve all the light that can be thrown upon it, and to require examination on all sides. Let us consider how men in their collective capacity are conducting and have conducted themselves in regard to what theologians will not, I presume, object to their being called, the two great gifts bestowed upon them—the “world” and the “word.” How do they study the first?—as if they knew all, or as if they had yet much to learn about it?

T. As if they had much to learn. Each generation of students goes to the work in the persuasion that it has two things to accomplish: one to make itself acquainted with what has already been learned; the other to make a further inroad, with the aid of that knowledge, upon the ignorance from which it seems to be man’s destiny gradually, through ages, to emancipate himself.

P. How do they study the second?—as if they knew all, or as if they had yet much to learn about it?

T. As if all that could be learned had already been learned; and as if the task allotted to each generation of students was confined to mastering that knowledge, by studying what past authorities had pronounced it to be. The further duty appended to this task is to preserve the knowledge which is thus inherited, and hand it down to another generation in the same state of preservation that it had been imparted.

P. Would these two courses of study, pursued in so very different a spirit, produce different states of mind in the students?

T. Students who pursued both would feel it to be their duty as well as their inclination to be on the alert for discovery in the first; while in the second it would be their duty to repress any inclination even to think discovery possible.

P. While we separate science from theology, the “world” from the “word,” for the convenience of studying each minutely and uninterruptedly, can they be kept apart in reality, as though they were entirely unconnected?

T. We suppose not. But we are not quite sure that we perceive the scope of your question.

P. My purpose will be gained if you will tell me whether you think that a student of theology in these days, if enlightened with merely a smattering of modern science, could read and interpret the Scriptures, as he would have read and interpreted them 500 years ago?

T. He could not do it, were he to try.

P. Would he interpret them now more in harmony with exalted notions of the Divine attributes—more as manifestations of the will of Him who is the perfection of goodness and wisdom, than he could have interpreted them 500 years ago?

T. More of course.

P. Is it a fact that theologians have too often been foremost in rejecting with indignation new contributions to science as hostile to Scripture, because they were irreconcilable with their interpretations of Scripture?

T. We certainly have to admit and regret that fact. Happily, succeeding theologians have become conscious of the mistakes of their predecessors, and have discovered that the Scriptures are beautifully in harmony with interpretations of science once by them pronounced to be false, since admitted to be incontrovertible.

P. May we congratulate modern theologians on having entirely abandoned the vicious mental courses of their predecessors?

T. Your congratulations would, we fear, be premature.

P. Is it a safe state of mind, to be able to think it possible for any truth to be opposed to religion?

T. We should call it a most dangerous state.

P. Does it happen that students of science are occasionally putting forward as truths what in reality are mere semblances of truth—illusions imperfectly examined?

T. Such ill-considered pretensions have often been witnessed.

P. Ought not theologians to expose them as opposed to religion ?

T. They will do that sufficiently by laying bare the illusions. The vindications of science and religion go hand in hand.

P. In what state of mind ought students of science to be as regards interpretations of Scripture ?

T. Full of faith that no new developments of theirs can be antagonistic to religion correctly expounded ; full of ardour to strike out new lights, not only for the advance of scientific knowledge, but for the additional power acquired of vindicating "the ways of God to man."

P. In what state of mind ought students of theology to be as regards science ?

T. Anxious to avail themselves of every new light and power that it can furnish wherewith to draw continually new instruction and new causes of reverence and gratitude from the new proofs of wisdom and benevolence hidden from the eyes of their fathers ; and shuddering at the thought of ever presenting religion as an obstacle to the reception of offerings from students of science. These offerings need to be scrupulously examined. If unsound, they are false, and therefore contrary to religion. If sound, true, and therefore in accordance with religion.

P. Putting all your answers together, do you not think that you are provided with the means of solving, partly, at all events, the enigma which has puzzled you—how it has happened that your instructors should have left you so entirely unsuspecting of the incapacity of children to grapple with the difficulties and appreciate the beauties of Scripture—sublime and striking when brought to light—though often buried deep beneath the surface ? and how it has happened that you should have been led to believe that all the great truths contained in Scripture had been elaborated ages ago by our forefathers, who have, accordingly, left us nothing to do but to study their comments, or repose upon the authority of those who had studied them, holding in pious horror any attempt to draw forth new beauties,

new manifestations of wisdom hitherto concealed from those who lacked the aid since contributed through the united researches of all engaged in the study of science ?

T. We begin to see how it has happened that we were sent forth from the training colleges in the pitiable state in which you found us, as regards the spiritual and moral portion of our duties towards the children under our care. As we certainly were not acquainted with the principles and rules of good self-guidance, and could not, therefore, teach them ; so we necessarily could not give that intellectual and moral training which would incline children to conform to rules unknown to them as well as to ourselves.

P. A few minutes will not be misapplied in examining how the right state of mind in regard to self-guidance should be cultivated in the young, so as most certainly to produce the desired effect. How do you propose to yourselves to conduct that work ?

T. We shall, as nearly as possible, teach in the spirit of the lessons which we have so often heard you give.

P. And what do you conceive to be the main object in all my lessons ?

T. We conceive your object to be two-fold.

1st. By a judicious selection, to place before the children such facts, events, and phenomena as, with your assistance, will be sure to interest them ; to awaken curiosity and a desire to learn more than they already know about them ; to lead them, by skilful questioning, to find out for themselves all that the exercise of their own understandings can bring forth ; to supply the material for those gaps which their own unassisted faculties could not otherwise fill ; and lastly, to raise them to a capacity of distinguishing for themselves, amid all the calls for action and self-restraint on the part of man, what conduct ought to be classed as good, as indifferent, and as bad, and why.

2nd. Progressively as the children learn to recognize the different characters of conduct, to bring to bear upon them all the influences of affection, of respect, of example, and of imi-

tation, so as to evoke in them an earnest desire to practise the conduct which they approve, to eschew the conduct which they condemn, and to turn their thoughts in upon the laws of their own being—upon their own constitution, physical and moral ; so that, knowing how much they, in common with all others, are the creatures of habit, they may resolutely strive, by the exercise of that self-discipline for which there is no substitute, to become the kind of men that they love and respect, and to avoid growing into the kind which they cannot but hate and fear or despise, qualified as their detestation may be by pity.

P. Going to your school-work animated with these sentiments, I may congratulate you beforehand upon your success. You will, of course, be prepared to encounter numerous instances of failure and disappointment. If these beset people in every walk of life, how little can the schoolmaster expect to escape, he being engaged in a work more behind the advanced knowledge of the age than any other that I can think of. Should those deluded creatures of whom we have spoken persevere in characterizing your proceedings as unchristian or irreligious, their imputations need not disturb you. Silent contempt, not unmixed with pity, is the utmost that most of them deserve.

Here and there, you say, some of them can and will throw hindrances in your way. These hindrances must be faced ; but they need not be magnified. Full often they are rather hindrances in appearance than in reality, and only effect their purpose by acting upon the fears of the cowards whom it is wished to obstruct. That infamous practice of hurling what is miscalled religion on the rail, to bring the education-train to a stand, or to upset it, will not alarm the intelligent engineer, nor even induce him to shut off his steam. He knows that he has but to deal with a fog-signal about to yield with an explosion under his wheel.

Nor should you conceal from yourselves that more powerful and dangerous opponents may cross your path. But ought they to make you turn aside from your duty, or only inspire you with

more determination, and call forth resources which but for the emergency might remain dormant within you? The faithful servant, bound on a confidential mission to some distant part, never loses sight of the object of his journey. Floods may make him deviate from his beaten track, or shift from his carriage to a boat. Or, if robbers infest the road, he will form his plan for beating them off or for circumventing them, whichever is least likely to interfere with the early and safe execution of his trust.

ON THEOLOGICO-MORALITY.



T. WE have often heard you speak most hopefully of the prospects of a future improved state of well-being for the great mass of the people. We would gladly participate in this hopefulness more largely than we do ; but we cannot divest ourselves of a suspicion that there are difficulties in the way of realizing your hopes, the means for removing which yet remain to be pointed out, assuming that they are to be found.

P. You are still a little faint-hearted. You fear that the fruits of the education which you are giving, and of the better education which, after more experience, may be given, will not quite come up to my expectation.

T. You are not doing us justice. We have full faith in what would be the effect of universal education like unto what you propose for infants and children, if we could but see our way to its being given. But when we reflect upon the wonderful advances in every other work to which man has put his hand, compared with those which he has made in education, we doubt whether you can have taken into account all the difficulties in the way of that work, granting, as we believe we may, that no over-estimate has been made of its capabilities for bringing about the improvements which you look forward to.

P. We understand one another sufficiently to make it unnecessary to go over in detail the particulars of the education which we believe might be given, and which we are desirous of assisting to impart to every human being. It comprises instruction in the duties of life and a course of discipline adapted to secure a ready and zealous performance of those

duties. We contend that education answering to this description is not given ; and that, if it were, the larger part of the destitution which afflicts this generation would cease to afflict our posterity.

T. And now we wish to be satisfied whether all the difficulties which have prevented and are preventing the diffusion of an education calculated to lead to such a result have been stated, or whether there must not be others much less easy to overcome which we have not yet adverted to.

P. To judge of this, ought we not to be thoroughly acquainted with the kind of persons who principally preside over the education of this country, and determine its tone and character ? What would your reply be to inquirers wishing to obtain such knowledge ?

T. We think we should say that education in this country was mostly under the influence of the clergy. They seem to preside over our chief colleges and universities, to be the masters of most of our endowed and proprietary schools, and if not the principals of our training colleges, to appoint them, as well as the masters of our national schools. The influence of their clergy over the education of the various dissenting bodies may not be so apparent, but we suspect that it is, if possible, more felt.

P. Adopting an expression which will enable us to speak of all shades of religious opinion together, whether in the Established Church or among dissenters, will you allow me to state that you think the theological element is the one which exercises the strongest influence over the education of the people, infant and adult, and especially over that part of education which gives a form to character and intelligence, as manifested in the performance of social duties ?

T. Whether that influence be, in your estimation, for good or for evil, we see no reason to doubt that the theological is by far the most powerful of all the influences at work to form the moral character of the people, which of course is to be judged by what are seen to be the objects of desire among them,

and the means resorted to for the purpose of obtaining those objects.

P. Would it be rash to attempt to form a judgment upon the merits of any prevailing education, without being informed of the manners, customs, and modes of living which flourish along with it?

T. It would; for although other influences besides those of education may be at work to give a direction to manners, customs, and modes of living, no single influence can be so strong as that of the education of the home, the school, and the pulpit, in combination.

P. And how are we to form a judgment upon the various manners, customs, and modes of living, whether comparing the present with the past, or those of one nation with another?

T. A comparison between the different states of well-being, between the different supplies of food, raiment, shelter, and means of recreation, as well as the states of health and duration of life, would be our first step towards forming such a judgment. Although differences of position and climate are not without their influence, wherever we saw superiority of well-being we should expect to find superiority of character. Besides, we would follow the course which we pursue in teaching our boys. Once accustomed to trace back from effects to causes, and forward from causes to effects, we could not fail to trace, where position and climate were similar, the different effects referable to differences of industry, intelligence, skill, economy, sobriety, trustworthiness, and parental forethought. And, lastly, we would compare the most favourable state of well-being of which thus far we have had experience with that better state which we believe to be attainable, and try to work out what advances in intelligence and changes in manners, habits, and modes of living would assist us to this better future state.

P. I need not ask the question. I may assume that you are not disposed to rest satisfied with the state of well-being to which we have attained thus far, nor with the intelligence,

manners, customs, and modes of living which preceded, if they did not cause it, nor even with the manners and habits, improved as they are generally admitted to be, now prevalent.

T. We are quite prepared to admit our want of entire satisfaction with the intelligence, manners, customs, and modes of living that have so far prevailed, and to state our conviction that they have not only preceded but caused a large part of the destitution so generally deplored. If we examine the conduct which is mixed up with this destitution, do we not see drunkenness, ignorance, brutality, dishonesty, child-neglect, and that foulest of all the blots on our manhood, "the social evil"? We may meet with people who doubt the possibility of so improving intelligence and morals as to greatly diminish destitution and its evil accompaniments, but nobody doubts that the diminution would be brought about were the improvement effected.

P. According to you, then, the difficulty to be solved is, whether intelligence and morals can be greatly improved; for in proportion as they are improved, that is, in proportion as we get rid of drunkenness, brutality, child-neglect, and the social evil, destitution, the inevitable accompaniment of all these, will disappear.

T. That seems to us to be the difficulty.

P. If we can put our fingers upon a great impediment in the way of imparting intelligence and morals—an impediment not generally recognized, but easily removed when once recognized—may we not consider that we have at least made one step towards solving the difficulty?

T. Certainly; and a most important one too.

P. Have we not in reality done something more? Do we not acknowledge that education is greatly subjected to theological influence? and have we not satisfied ourselves of the causes which have retarded and still retard the progress of theologico-intelligence?

T. We cannot deny that you have pointed out to our entire satisfaction the causes which have made the intelligence of

theologians lag behind the general intelligence, repressed as that has been by the influence exercised over education by theologians ; but these causes ought not to be difficult of removal. It appears to us, however, that the indifference in acting up to what intelligence, imperfect as it is, clearly recommends, is a greater impediment in the way of social improvement than even our short-comings in intelligence.

P. If I do not misunderstand you, it is your opinion that although much human misery is occasioned by want of intelligence, much more is attributable to a laxity of conduct, by no means pleasant to confess, but too plain to be denied.

T. And the laxity of conduct on which our thoughts are just now fixed is not that conduct in a comparatively few which defies the will of society, whether recorded in laws or gathered from public opinion, but that conduct which habitually and all but universally disregards the plainest injunctions of religion as professed. Some people denounce this discrepancy between conduct and profession as hypocrisy. But to us it appears like a deep-seated habit too strong to be resisted, while its mastery is unperceived ; whereas hypocrisy can only be imputed, with propriety, to those who are conscious of their inconsistency and untruthfulness. Nevertheless, it is a disorder, whether intellectual, moral or religious, which greatly obstructs improvement ; and we should indeed rejoice if you could explain to us how it was contracted, and how it is to be cured.

P. I fear I can do little more than take part in your inquiry. We may help one another to points of view whence to observe, raised above some of the considerations which tend to conceal the principal subject of inquiry, and to confuse inquirers. The entanglement, after all, may rather be in our thoughts than inherent in the subject. Let us have before us what it is that we seem to understand thoroughly—to have no doubt about ; and what we wish further to learn or to clear up. In our present state of knowledge, imperfect as it is, there is much to be thankful for, much to make us hopeful of learning more,

and of turning what we have learned to better account, despite our doubts and perplexities. Man has reached firm standing ground, whence to prosecute his further inquiries, when he has risen to the capacity of judging conduct according to its tendency to promote well-being, and character according to its tendency to insure good conduct. There are difficulties enough, even with the advantages of the wider range, and of the opportunities of more undisturbed inspection afforded by the unbroken view from this standing ground. For, let us ask, are all the men who admit that conduct ought to be judged by this standard of one mind as to the particular kinds—the rules of conduct which most deserve to be approved ?

T. They certainly are not ; although, whether we look at the course of modern legislation, or at the current of public opinion, we may observe a nearer approach than formerly to uniformity and coherence, both in our legal and extra-legal judgments—a result clearly attributable to the growing practice of estimating conduct by its tendency to promote or disturb well-being.

P. After the acquisition of a principle or test whereby to judge conduct, it is still possible that we may err in applying it. But to know a principle about which there can be no doubt, to have been able, by its help, to emancipate ourselves from former prejudices and superstitions, to introduce order into our investigations, and to lighten our darkness, is a guarantee that perseverance will overcome all future difficulties, and clear up all remaining perplexities.

T. Might we not say that moral science, through the application of this principle, has been extricated from chaos, much as astronomical science was by the discovery and application of the principle of gravitation ?

P. Perhaps we might. But we have as much to do in applying our grand principle to the elucidation of morals, as the astronomers have in applying their grand principle to its purposes—possibly more. Can we say that moralists or inquirers into conduct are as nearly agreed in their judgments upon acts, and upon the men who perform them, as astronomers

are in judging of the positions and movements of the heavenly bodies ?

T. No. They certainly have not yet approached that unanimity.

P. When two conflicting judgments upon conduct have been arrived at by two sets of inquirers, what means are available for ascertaining which of the two is the better judgment, or whether some error is not mixed up with them both ? Supposing past authorities, and learning, industry, and sagacity in studying them, to have done their utmost, and in vain, to pre-determine what conduct is good and what conduct is bad, is no light, no aid, no correction procurable from any other quarter ?

T. There is one resource still remaining. Each judgment, as exemplified in conduct, may be tested. The acts flowing from it, sanctioned or recommended by it, may be watched and examined. The consequences of the acts, accurately traced, will confirm or condemn the judgment which had previously classed them.

P. Would this opportunity for testing the correctness of conflicting judgments be readily found, if people were careless to make conduct conform to judgments pronounced and recorded, and thereby presumed to be accepted as believed in and to be acted upon ?

T. Scarcely ; at all events, not so readily as if people were careful. In fact, it is not unreasonable to suppose that much of the improvement in conduct that we have to rejoice in has arisen from the sight of what is distressing and unsatisfactory, from the desire of preventing its recurrence and from reflecting upon the causes which may have occasioned it.

P. It is suspected by some people that the improvements in man's conduct, as regards his fellow men, have not kept pace with his improved conduct in all other respects. We may, perhaps, do something towards satisfying ourselves whether this suspicion be warranted, and if it be, how it has happened that man's conduct towards his fellow men should have lagged behind his other conduct, by examining the course of pro-

ceedings through which some of his improvements or successes appear to have been accomplished. If I were to examine his conduct as a cultivator of the land, how might we infer that he had reached to his present comparative superiority ?

T. By trying new methods, some recommended by others, and others suggested by himself, persevering with those that answered, rejecting those that failed.

P. How has he proceeded in bringing about those remarkable improvements made of late years in transport and inter-communication ?

T. In the same manner ; and many of the details have been preserved to us of the trials, of the hopes and fears, that accompanied the experiments, and of the failures and disappointments. The improvements upon improvements which have resulted from them are in daily use.

P. What has been his course of action in mining, in smelting, and in the various processes of manufacture ?

T. Much the same.

P. Has man's progress in all these lines been the result of efforts to increase his producing powers ?

T. We think we may say that it has. For when he has hit upon anything new, as it were, by accident, it has depended upon his observation and intelligence to hold by it as worth preserving, or to abandon it as worthless as an agent of increased production.

P. Which, in your opinion, would be the more correct representation of man's conduct in carrying out his industrial works : to say that he endeavoured to frame a course of action for his guidance, to lay down precise and definite rules by which to abide till better advised, or that he was altogether indifferent about well-defined plans and rules ?

T. To say the latter would be obviously untrue. His industrial career has been one of continued effort, and particularly of late years, to contrive and design improved processes ; to specify them minutely and accurately ; to reduce them to practice with the utmost care and precision ; to note the

results, and then to adopt or reject, partly or wholly, according to the estimate of the results, and of the means which contributed to produce them.

P. Does it appear to you that man would have attained to his present state of efficiency in industrial work had he been slatternly in his designs and plans, inexact in his descriptions, ambiguous and confused in his expressions, and careless both to understand and to execute the work thus imperfectly prepared?

T. We do not see how he could possibly have risen to his present state of efficiency by any such ill-advised modes of proceeding. Definite and intelligible plans, accurately expressed, are indispensable auxiliaries for executing well what has been well conceived, and for correcting mishaps and oversights.

P. I always become timid and anxious, while inquiring into rules of conduct, if I deviate from the ways of the administrators of our great works. I long to verify as I go along, for fear of drifting into some of those phantom-like rules which beguile the judgment and misdirect conduct. Modern industrial works present to us opportunities for observing systematized courses of action, the study of which may throw much light upon the causes which obstruct improvement in non-industrial conduct—improvement so desperately needed for the advancement of well-being, and so earnestly looked for by intelligent and religious men. You will not object to search with me for means of testing, of verifying or correcting the conclusions which we are disposed to adopt. If we were to make inquiry upon one of our large modern farms, what notions should we be likely to bring away concerning the method of conducting its tillage?

T. That the whole course of cultivation was systematically thought over and laid out by the farmer, that able heads and hands under him were engaged in executing his orders, and also in suggesting improvements, while younger and less experienced men were working and learning under them; accurate accounts being kept of the courses of cropping, of the number and condition of the stock, of the instruments of agriculture; and lastly,

of the expenditure and receipts, so as to ascertain how far the balance of profit corresponded with what had been anticipated.

P. Could not a thoroughly capable farmer cultivate his farm successfully without troubling himself with these elaborate details?

T. We doubt whether any farmer who did not so trouble himself could be thoroughly capable. The tangle of the details unattended to and ill-arranged would, we fancy, trouble him more than he need trouble himself by attending to reduce them to order. It is by the careful watching of the execution of his plans, and of the carrying out of his intentions, that he is able to detect where his expenditure and pains have been misapplied, where new suggestions may be tried with hope of advantage, and how, in fine, the best results in respect of profit may be obtained from the system in actual operation, or how that system may be more fully carried out or corrected, or partially superseded.

P. If from the farmer we were to turn to the builder of some of our modern large steam-vessels, what might we learn from him?

T. That every step of his work is preceded by an exact conception of the end to which it is destined. The dimensions and structure of the ship being first designed, so as to adapt it for the employment prepared for it, the details down to their minutest parts are specified with scrupulous accuracy. In some cases, deviations are purposely introduced as improvements during the progress of the work; but mostly, the plans are executed as originally designed, the improvements, if any are suggested during the execution or after the completion of the work in hand, being adopted in the next.

P. Is a similar course followed in conducting the business of a factory, of a counting-house, of a railway, of a dock?

T. Similar in spirit, although varied in form.

P. Is this observable in the proceedings of all—that a definite course of action is laid down, that the results of this course, in all its parts and in its entirety, are watched and

noted, that deviations from it, expected to be improvements, are tried from time to time, and persevered in or abandoned according as they stand the test of trial?

T. It is—at least in the proceedings of those who conduct their business successfully. One might safely say that in all cases where failure occurs, it is attributable to negligence in following out this course, or to the want of capacity to understand and adopt it. In the more numerous cases where failure is avoided, the success of each may be seen to be in proportion to the intelligence with which the wisdom of this course is apprehended, and the fidelity with which it is followed out. The result to mankind is the continuous addition which has been made, particularly of late years, to the means of enjoyment, and which, with right conduct in other respects, might be accessible to all.

P. Are there any persons whose special vocation it is to lay down rules for this “conduct in other respects,” in which, I suppose, you include the conduct of man to man—to notify what must be done, what may be done or left undone, and what must not be done, and to give a tone to the desires and aspirations and efforts in regard to that conduct, much in the same way as administrators of capital guide and direct conduct in their several industrial establishments?

T. Our law-makers and the functionaries who expound and apply the laws, and, where necessary, enforce obedience to them, are the parties who seem to come nearest to administrators of capital in exercising direct control over the conduct of others. Their efforts are aided, and we might also say supplemented, by the whole body of teachers—teachers of adults and infants, whether from the pulpit, the professor’s chair, or in the schoolroom.

P. Trying to comprise all those parties under two heads, let us say that legislators and teachers do for conduct in general what administrators of capital do for special conduct. How may we characterize the ends or objects towards which they are desirous of directing conduct?

T. Legislators and teachers are desirous, or at least ought to be desirous, of directing conduct, so as to make it promote the general well-being. Administrators of capital are striving indirectly towards the same end, directly to produce abundance of wealth.

P. How do legislators stand a comparison with administrators of capital in regard to the definiteness and appositeness of the rules which they have devised for accomplishing their purpose?

T. We think the pre-eminence must be awarded to administrators of capital. From the smallest up to the largest of their undertakings—from fitting us with clothes, and providing us with furniture, up to the means of transport and communication on their present grand scale—they seem to surpass anything that we could have expected, and to be continually improving upon former methods. Legislators of late years have certainly come much nearer to their rivals; and if we could banish from our minds all recollection of the foolish, contradictory, oppressive, and inhuman laws, from which we have but just been relieved, we might not so readily rank legislators below administrators of capital.

P. Can you account for the comparative want of success which has attended the efforts of legislators? Is their work more difficult?

T. It is generally considered to be so; but then the individuals to whom the work is assigned are supposed to be more instructed and capable men.

P. Do we find that our grander and more difficult industrial works are less successfully executed than our smaller and easier?

T. No; and, as your question implies, that ought to make us suspect that the comparative want of success in our legislators must be traceable to some other cause than the difficulty of their work.

P. Administrators of capital, we are agreed, have always been intent upon devising and applying the means best adapted

to accomplish a special purpose. Working in this state of mind, they have not only attained to a certain amount of success, but have been steadily improving upon previous success. Have legislators been doing their work in a similar state of mind ?

T. We think that they are working in this state of mind now. Hence our greatly improved laws. Their former inferiority to administrators of capital may be attributed to their want of any well-defined purpose, or to shifting, mistaken, and conflicting purposes—whence many of the laws were dictated by passion, caprice, prejudice and superstition.

P. And how do you conceive that modern legislators have been able to extricate themselves from the chaos of stupid, ferocious, contradictory, and capricious laws which they inherited from their predecessors ?

T. By their participation in the gradually advancing intelligence ; but more particularly by their having grasped the idea that all laws ought to be so framed as to promote the general well-being, and that existing laws, where not so framed, should be repealed or so modified as to adapt them to that purpose. It appears to us, so far as we are able to judge, that the tone of the debates which have preceded and accompanied the changes in our laws of late years, as well as the changes themselves, bear out the accuracy of our representation.

P. I doubt whether any intelligent man at all conversant with the history of the last forty years would dispute either your facts or your inferences. There may be grave differences of opinion as to what further changes are desirable in our laws ; but we are all of one mind that our laws, criminal and civil, commercial and financial, and our system of procedure have been altered within that period, so as to be much more efficient in conducting to the general well-being, and that the alterations have been made with that intention. Legislators, we have agreed, may do much to promote the general well-being, but they cannot do all that is needful to secure it. Even what they will do must depend upon their inclinations

and intelligence. Moreover, a large part of the well-being of society must be the result of individual acts over which legislatures are incapable of exercising direct control. This brings us to the consideration of what our teachers have done and are doing for us. How will they stand a comparison with legislators and administrators of capital? Do they top both, or do they lag behind legislators, as legislators lag behind administrators of capital?

T. That question is more easily proposed than answered.

P. Your remark would apply to many other questions which, nevertheless, it is desirable should be proposed, and, if possible, answered also. Does it not interest us greatly to learn whether our teachers are doing all that ought to be expected of them, whether their efforts are impeded by influences beyond their control, or whether they are impeding the efforts of others?

T. It certainly does, although we do not see our way to forming an opinion upon the subject. We might fancy that teachers and legislators are much on a par, seeing, as you say, that the efforts of legislators depend much upon their inclinations and intelligence; and these, it may be presumed, are greatly influenced by their teachers.

P. When you say "greatly" influenced, do you not mean "wholly" influenced?

T. No. For we cannot shut our eyes to what is called the influence of circumstances. Great discoveries and the applications of them—gunpowder, the magnet, steam, electricity, and the speculations of such men as Bacon, Newton, Locke, Adam Smith, and Bentham—have acted upon legislators to strengthen or counteract the tendencies derived from their teachers.

P. You ought to be greatly encouraged to persevere in your inquiry, for you have already hit upon a suggestion that may help you through your difficulties. Have teachers done their best to prepare legislators and others to profit by new lights and powers when they come, and even to look for their coming;

or have they done much to raise up an indisposition to accept them, and, still more, to look for them ?

T. The severe and protracted struggles which have preceded the acceptance of new truths, the repeal of absurd and abominable laws, and the abandonment of degrading superstitions might make us suspect that the efforts of teachers have not hitherto been directed very vigorously in preparing pupils' minds to expect and look for new truths, and to welcome and appreciate their arrival ; unless, indeed, there be something so repugnant in the displacement of error by truth, of superstition and prejudice by religion and sense, that but for the efforts of our teachers the displacement could never be effected.

P. I think we have agreed that our teaching, or at all events the systematic and professional part of it, is principally in the hands and under the influence of theologians. If we were justified in the estimate which we formed of theologicointelligence, can we say that they have been favouring the dissemination of light and truth, or must we admit that they have been obstructing it as much as teachers can who, while limiting their instruction to the past, cannot entirely shut out glimpses of the present and the future ?

T. The impression which has abided with us from our former conversations certainly is that the thought of encouraging a spirit of cautious and yet searching inquiry is not uppermost in the minds of our teachers. Research into the past, holding fast by what is found there, and fidelity of reproduction, are the chief employments of youth under theological guidance.

P. Exercises not to be despised, if associated with that spirit of inquiry which keeps on the look-out for new truths and the correction of past errors, otherwise tending to strengthen persistency in prejudice, superstition, and misconduct. And we have now to consider whether they have been so associated. Let us return for a moment to some of our former inquiries. Have they not brought us to form a judg-

ment upon the proper mode of dealing both with conduct and opinions at variance with the prevailing wishes and feelings of society ?

T. They have. We agreed that society ought to be tolerant of opinions in which it does not concur, or more, that it ought to foster the disposition to inquire, and to sanction freedom of expression and discussion, not because it can wish or ought to be indifferent among conflicting doctrines, but because all experience has shown us how much past folly and error, mistaken at the time for wisdom and truth, we have had to get rid of, and has led us to suspect that all the zeal for inquiry and fearlessness in utterance which can be mustered, will not be more than enough to accomplish our release from other follies and errors still lurking in disguise among us.

P. And looking to our houses of parliament for evidence of the spirit in which our legislators are inclined to deal with conduct and opinions deviating from the received standard of good and true, what appears to you to be the prevailing tone there ?

T. Intolerance of conduct, with a steady improvement in capacity of discrimination between good and bad, through the growing practice of estimating conduct by its tendency to promote well-being ; and tolerance of opinions, year by year more general, from the persuasion that our security for retaining the means of well-being of which we are possessed, and for obtaining the further means of well-being so urgently needed, depends greatly upon fearlessness of expression as well as of inquiry.

P. When you describe our legislators as intolerant of conduct, do you mean that they strive to repress by law all the conduct of which they disapprove ?

T. No. While they repress some, they leave much to be frowned upon and discountenanced by public opinion, instructed and exhorted by teachers in the schools and from the pulpits.

P. And do teachers imitate legislators in their dealings with conduct and opinions ?

T. We are hardly prepared to answer that question. We are inclined to think that they agree with legislators in denouncing bad conduct, but we doubt whether they are as tolerant of differences of opinion.

P. Legislators refrain from pronouncing all bad acts to be criminal, fearing to diminish rather than to increase well-being were they to make the attempt. What dependence may we place upon our teachers for procuring exemption from that bad conduct which has not been pronounced criminal? What is the general scope of the teachings and preachings, so far as they bear directly upon conduct?

T. They may not be the best conceivable; but you would not deny to our teachers the merit of aiming in the right direction.

P. Ought we not to look for something more? Should we be treating our teachers with much respect if we did not give them credit for doing their best, in common with administrators of capital and legislators, to promote the general well-being?

T. We should not. Doubtless they are generally doing their best, and would do more if they knew how.

P. And we are not justified in affirming that they might do more, if we cannot point out where they fall short of what is required and may be done. Intolerance of bad conduct, of the commission of acts, or of the omission to perform them, where human misery must be the consequence of either, ought to characterize a teacher as much as a legislator. Now, may we not say that child-neglect is of all non-criminal bad conduct the very worst?

T. That we have already admitted, and we see no reason for retracting our admission. But, surely, you do not mean that teachers sanction child-neglect?

P. You never heard a sermon, a discourse, or a lesson, in which it was justified. You have heard many in which it was rebuked. But acts, not words—conduct, not profession—must guide our judgments in deciding what it is that people are in

earnest to discourage or to promote. Have you ever heard vain display and luxurious living in the midst of destitution sanctioned from the pulpit ?

T. Never. But we have heard the very reverse. Even the accumulation of riches, through which the propensity to display and indulge may be gratified, is severely reprobated.

P. Granting that child-neglect and vain display and profusion of expense are alike condemned in words, are they alike condemned in conduct ?

T. We dare not say that they are. The prevalence of vain display and profuse expenditure in the midst of so much suffering preventible by a judicious application of the very wealth misapplied, is the saddest of all the sad spectacles for the good and the thoughtful to contemplate.

P. Are the men who are most conspicuous in this sinful course of life shunned by those whose special vocation it is to preach down and to live down sin ? Do our teachers turn their backs upon those hardened sinners who parade their disregard of the most obvious duties ? Do they warn off the young and the uncontaminated from contact with this moral leprosy ?

T. It appears to us that the clergy of all denominations act much like other men. They are quite as eager to obtain wealth, quite as fond of display, and, so far from shunning the society of those who are foremost in gorgeous living, they court it. Among the clergy, as among other men, are to be found many who greatly disapprove and rigidly eschew so sinful a course of life. But the proportion of those who avail themselves of every opportunity to get wealth, and to spend it profusely, seems to be about the same as that which is to be found in other classes.

P. When you institute a comparison between teachers and other classes, you must not forget that, while in all individuals there must necessarily be points of conduct in which all are nearly on a level as men, there are also to be found points in which individuals of each class are above the individuals of all

other classes. The pre-eminence of scavengers who remove the filth from our streets, of the police who keep ruffians from our homes, of soldiers who defend us from invasion, of sailors who brave the dangers of the seas, of doctors and nurses who attend the sick, of farmers, merchants, manufacturers, and carriers, who each in their own line perform some special work for society, is undoubted. You have pointed out where our clergy are on a level with other men ; wherein are they pre-eminent ?

T. They are at least pre-eminent in ecclesiastical and theological learning.

P. You do not say that they are pre-eminent in teaching good conduct, either by precept or example. Am I to conclude that the teachers to whom is confided the cultivation and propagation of extra-legal good conduct, whose vocation it ought to be to denounce, to repress, and at least to discountenance bad conduct, are tolerant of it ?

T. Are you not generalizing somewhat unwarrantably ?

P. You hesitate to answer the question as I have shaped it. I will try to modify it so as to enable you to give your verdict. Are the moulders of the extra-legal conduct of mankind tolerant of the worst of all the extra-legal kinds of bad conduct ?

T. We must confess that they are not so intolerant as we could wish to see them.

P. You still hold back. You are still reluctant to deliver your verdict. If we were not mistaken in our opinion formerly expressed—that good conduct is an essential in the character of a Christian, and that child-neglect is a very grave case of misconduct—what ought to be our judgment of the efficiency of so-called Christian teachers, if we find them remiss in preaching against that sin and in pointing out its enormity, or luke-warm and faint-hearted in rebuking sinners, especially wealthy sinners ?

T. We should be obliged to admit that they ill performed their sacred functions.

P. We can conceive of a race of Christian teachers finding themselves in a state of society similar to our own, and holding

a position in it equivalent to that of our clerical dignitaries, who might differ from them very greatly in their conduct. What would be the effect upon society if, quitting their own palatial residences, they proclaimed their inability to enjoy peace of mind within them, or to interchange hospitality with the magnates of the land, till efficient measures had been taken for providing that no child should be left untrained and untaught ? Would not the rich quail before them if they preached to others, and bore testimony to the sincerity of their belief, in deed as well as in word, that the enjoyment of heavenly bliss, escape from eternal torment, was no more to be hoped for by the resident of a mansion who closed his eyes obdurately to the claims of infancy than by the witness who perjured himself in a court of law ?

T. We don't know how this mode of pleading the cause and asserting the claims of children would be received by the rich and powerful, but it would thoroughly exculpate Christian teachers from all suspicion of hollowness in their professions, or of indifference to the most flagrant of sins while preaching against it. Nobody would dare to say that Christianity was a sham in the face of such teaching. You should adhere to your own nomenclature. Preachers and teachers who preach, teach, and act in this way ought not to be confounded with those who preach, teach, and act differently. The first may be looked up to as Christian moralists. But no higher title can be bestowed upon the latter than theologico-moralists.

P. As we are of one mind that "morality proper" means a systematic collection of rules of conduct, by which all individuals should be brought to abide, in order, if possible, to promote, and, certainly, not to disturb, the general well-being, what special duty would you assign to teachers in connection with morality, and what qualifications would you insist upon their being possessed of ?

T. It is, of course, their special duty to teach morality, to induce to conduct in conformity with its rules, and where manners, habits, and misinterpretations of religion have set up

non-conformity, to wean from those malpractices, for such they may be called. The qualifications for the performance of this duty, obviously, are a thorough knowledge of moral rules, and aptitude in expounding, illustrating, and recommending them, combined with that personal bearing which gives weight to appeals, exhortations, remonstrances, or denunciations, as occasion may call for them.

P. Have teachers hitherto had to perform their duties in a state of society where morality is generally understood as we understand it, and is practised as well as professed?

T. Our confession must be that they have not. History and contemporary practice teem with examples of the sanction of conduct diametrically opposed to what modern enlightenment accepts as moral, as well as of conduct no less opposed to the morality professed.

P. How would you judge of teachers who, finding their lot cast in such a state of society, task themselves, not to awaken sinners to the errors of their ways, but to adapt their teaching by suppression, interpolation, and mystification, so as to make the rules of morality appear to justify sinful practices?

T. Such teachers would be corruptors rather than purifiers of society.

P. Did you ever hear of directors of large industrial concerns who, instead of keeping clear and accurate accounts, have, for the purposes of temporary gain, falsified them, or, as it has been termed, "cooked them," or "made them pleasant," introducing so much of confusion as would hide the indications of future bankruptcy, under a show of large profits in the form of immediate dividends?

T. We have; although we do not see the drift of your question.

P. Which would you condemn as the viler malefactors: directors of industrial concerns who cooked their accounts, or religious teachers who cooked the rules of morality so as to reconcile sinners to persevere in enjoyments incompatible with general well-being?

T. We now see the drift of your former question. But you should not call such teachers "religious teachers."

P. In the midst of the torpor, the tendency to repose in the past which distinguishes ecclesiastics, there is one sign reassuring for humanity. Some of their number, ever and anon, seem to wake up from the general slumber, and show that the spirit of inquiry, the love of truth and courage in proclaiming it, although rare, are not quite extinct in the ecclesiastical mind. The kind of obstacles from their own brethren which they have to struggle against will best be understood by running your eyes over the string of imputations, innuendos, and invectives to be met with in one of the most remarkable of the onslaughts that have been made on some of their late attempts to awaken their less sensible brethren to the inconsistencies, incoherencies, and immoralities heedlessly clung to by professing Christians, to the great detriment of society and of Christianity also.

"Infidelity," "atheism," "irreligiousness," "violation of professional fitness," "criminal levity," "laxity," "daring flippancy," "animosity," "abandonment of all Christian doctrine," "stammering, equivocating, and dishonest subscription," figure among the imputations with which they are profusely bespattered. Next, there are reproaches mixed with sneers at their position as "unhappy clergymen," as "honest men and believers in Christianity," avowing doctrines which are characterized as "sceptical, metaphysical speculations, incompatible with the Bible and the Christian faith," unfit for "clerical lips," and scrutinizing "propositions hitherto received with reverent submission." The gravamen of all the offences committed by these would-be inquirers into, and improvers and purifiers of, Christianity, as interpreted by comparative barbarians, in the eyes of their clerical brethren, is the "remorseless application of criticism," the "free handling of sacred subjects," as if real Christianity were as little capable of surviving criticism as their misrepresentations of it. Lastly, there is the attempt to frighten away inquirers by denunciations

of the “pride of reason,” something much more heinous, I suppose, in their estimation than the “pride of stupidity.” This “pride of reason,” it appears, begets an offspring still more odious than itself, since “the spiritual child of the rationalist develops into the atheist,” and thrives in a “haze cast by vanity, love of novelty, and the pride of intellect.”

What are we to think of a church which thus welcomes attempts at internal improvement among its own members, besides denouncing those who make them as hypocrites for abiding in a church which they hope to “rationalize,” and threatening exposure and expulsion unless retreat anticipate the punishment so richly merited by “remorseless rationalism”?

T. One would think that the men who can resort to such substitutes for “rationalism” as you have collected were bent upon extinguishing, rather than upon improving, the church of which they are members.

P. They certainly succeed in satisfying us that there are human beings whose liability to be charged with “rationalism” is very remote. There is nothing rational about them. But while we grieve to think how completely they show that the description “*Homo est animal rationale*” has its exceptions, and make us exclaim “*Quem Deus vult perdere prius dementat*,” we must try and gather strength and wisdom by studying the causes which lead to such weakness and folly. If they cannot teach us what we ought to do, may not their example shew us what we ought to avoid?

T. You would use them as the Spartans of old used their drunken Helots.

P. The Spartans, it is said, made their Helots drunk, in order that the disgusting spectacle might deter their young men from indulging in strong drinks. Do you think that I wish to make anybody irrational for my purposes?

T. We are sure you don’t. Neither is it necessary. Theologians seem determined to keep you over supplied with examples of what ought to be avoided.

P. With the examples before us of the reception given by ecclesiastics to those of their brethren who have been awakened to a sense of the misconceptions and misrepresentations of the scope of revelation, and of the misapplications of its teachings derived from barbarous ages, do you think your own lot is so much worse than that of others who share with you in the enjoyment of intelligence, and in the consciousness of being keepers of their own souls ?

T. No : we must admit that a thinking ecclesiastic is more cruelly dealt by even than we are.

P. Do you suppose that the inquiries in which we have been engaged, the conclusions at which we have arrived, and the line of conduct which we are marking out for ourselves, would receive the countenance and encouragement of ecclesiastics who can bestow such scurrilous treatment upon their own brethren ?

T. Any mildness of language that they might condescend to in characterizing our speculations and projects, would only be for the sake of contrast to the severe terms in which they speak of their own "erring brothers."

P. The "erring brothers" you mention, who have lately been endeavouring—whether wisely or not I will not venture to say—to make faith and reason coincide, have drawn forth replies from those whose motto is "*stare super antiquas vias*;" and a bishop has written a preface to certify to the clergy, and to all who cannot and dare not think for themselves, that these replies are free from all traces of "rationalism." Let us examine how far his notions of morality coincide with ours. Here is an introductory specimen of his style of treating those who, in thinking for themselves, think differently from him :— "These difficulties gather their strength from a spirit of lawless rejection of all authority, from a daring claim for the unassisted human intellect to be able to discover, measure, and explain all things. The rejection of the faith, which, in the last age, assumed the coarse and vulgar features of an open Atheism, which soon destroyed itself in its own multiply-

ing difficulties—intellectual, moral, civil, and political—has robed itself now in more decent garments, and exhibits to the world the old deceit with far more comely features; for the rejection of all fixed faith, all definite revelation, and all certain truth, which is intolerable to man as a naked Atheism, is endurable, and even seductive, when veiled in the more decent half-concealment of Pantheism. The human soul, in its greatness and in its weakness crying after God, cannot bear to be told that God is nowhere, but can be cajoled by the artful concealment of the same lie under the assertion that God is everywhere, for that everything is God.” *

Supposing that your unbounded contempt for an ecclesiastic guilty of using such language to other ecclesiastics, as much morally and intellectually his superiors as they are conventionally his inferiors, did not deprive his words of all weight, which would make you smart most—to be pointed at as a coarse vulgar atheist, or an artful liar?

T. You shall never have occasion again to reproach us with unmanly repining. Such language, come whence it will, can excite no feelings but those of scorn and disgust in decently constituted men. “Not that which goeth into the mouth, but that which cometh out of the mouth defileth the man.” Oh, that bishops would be as painstaking to make their thinking apparatus within as capable of supplying sentiments fit for utterance, as they are in providing a cooking apparatus without to prepare palatable food to be received into the stomach!

P. Again: “Two distinct courses seem to me to be required by such a state of things.

“First—the distinct, solemn, and, if need be, severe decision of authority, that assertions such as these cannot be put forward as possibly true, or even advanced as admitting of question, by honest men, who are bound by voluntary obligations to teach the Christian revelation as the truth of God.

“Secondly—we need the calm, comprehensive, scholar-like

* Preface of the Lord Bishop of Oxford, pp. v., vi.

declaration of positive truth upon all matters in dispute, by which the shallowness, and the passion, and the ignorance of the new system of unbelief may be thoroughly displayed." * The "state of things" here referred to is the attempt of certain divines to call attention to what they conceive to be misinterpretations of "Christian revelation." What would you think of them if they withheld their objections, stifled their convictions, and assisted to perpetuate the disfigurements of Scripture which shocked them?

T. They would be degraded in our eyes, and in their own also, unless as completely lost to all sense of shame as their calumniators. They would, perhaps, have a better chance of obtaining a seat on the episcopal bench.

P. Whose "authority" is that to which the bishop refers?

T. His own in reality. No doubt he would say the authority of God: but that authority would be as communicated and expounded by the Church, and accepted with all humility by himself.

P. And never to be modified, whatever doubts might be forced upon his mind?

T. Bishops, we suppose, are not liable to those inconvenient mental affections which, in company with "honesty," might shake their faith, and, at the same time, endanger the security by which they hold their palaces.

P. The bishop sneers at the "honest" men who choose to remain in a church which they think it their duty to improve. Have you any means of judging of the extent to which "honesty" prevails among bishops?

T. No. Where people's honours and emoluments are attached to particular confessions of faith, belief in their honesty must be yielded on trust, or withheld altogether. But we think we could more easily discover signs of "shallowness" in the "honesty" of this bishop, than in the "unbelief" of those whom he would victimize. He seems to satisfy

* *Idem*, pp. ix. x.

us that we should be unjust to other theologians if we did not distinguish him from the common herd. Theologico-morality scarcely suffices to mark this bishop's deviation from true morality. His morality merits the appellation of "Episcopo-morality."

P. As I believe that, when child-neglect ceases to be tolerated, most other kinds of bad conduct will be greatly diminished, or disappear altogether, I will not cite examples of any other kinds, except so far as they may happen to be included among cases of bad conduct in regard to freedom of opinion and expression. We have agreed that it is one of the most important of moral duties to encourage, not merely the tolerance, but the cultivation of habits of freedom of thought and expression as the mainstays of integrity and candour, the conservators of knowledge, the correctors of error, and the pioneers of improvement and progress. How do the clergy of all denominations stand before the world as promoters of openness of disposition, non-concealment of thought, ardour in the search of truth, confession of doubt and difficulty of belief, and even of dissent? Are they as tolerant of freedom of thought and expression as they are of conduct which is adverse to well-being, and which ought, accordingly, to be regarded by them as irreligious and unchristian?

T. They are not. Indeed, there is a fundamental difficulty in their way. A church, a sect, a denomination, without a distinguishing doctrine, is inconceivable.

P. But have you not agreed that freedom of thought and of expression ought to be cultivated for the sake of progressive well-being? If you hold to that opinion, must you not also admit that the attempt to chain down mankind to a predetermined set of doctrines, regardless of the calls that may arise from within to modify or reject them, is detrimental to well-being?

T. Efforts ought to be made to found a church, the doctrines of which it would be no more possible to reject than the truths of astronomy, of chemistry, or of any other science.

P. You are putting forward a novel proposal for an universal church, the fundamental doctrine of which is to be the duty of seeking truth and self-improvement as the means of finding them. Teachers in this church would have to abstain from imposing, and to rely upon their capacity for expounding, as full of faith as teachers of science in the conclusions which must be arrived at, where the teachers are qualified for their work. Is a proposal of this kind likely to find favour with theologians as we observe them at the present day?

T. Possibly not. Nevertheless, theologians share in the general movement. The striving for truth, the desire to vindicate the ways of God to man, to clear away the filth and encumbrances with which they have been defiled and obstructed, and to become worthy to walk in those ways has been irrepressible. In spite of the stake and the rack, massacres innumerable, mutilations, fines, and imprisonments, and the mutterings of the "odium theologicum," kept within bounds by the secular muzzle which now confines it, men have split and continue to split themselves into churches and sects, in every one of which we constantly hear the rumble and see the signs of theological disruption.

P. Can it be that the dire afflictions which you have mentioned, and the unsettled state of feeling which still prevail, can arise out of the pure love of truth and singleness of purpose in seeking and propagating it?

T. Rather out of the effort to repress it. We speak feelingly. We have suffered great distress of mind. The theological intolerance of freedom of opinion and expression is frightful. Theologians cannot bear to hear their own doctrines questioned, nor contradictions charged to them, which they see others ready to admit, although imperceptible to themselves.

P. But do not the controversies between various sects, and even the more bitter controversies within the precincts of each, tend to elicit truth? Are they not better than a dull and apathetic acquiescence in accepted doctrines which, unless

former experience has deceived us, are likely to be discarded eventually as superstitious misrepresentations of religion?

T. There will be better hopes of improvement for churches, and also for their permanence, when once the members of them shall be generally convinced of these truths, and so confident in their ability to teach and defend their own doctrines as to welcome all criticisms and objections. They will then have the benefit of "controversy" relieved from its bitterness.

P. As you would neither have the truth, or what is believed to be the truth, undefended, nor its assailants deterred from expressing and recommending their objections, are you prepared to point out how it is possible to avoid bitterness of feeling and aversion while we are defending sacred truths against those who, as we think, are attacking them ingeniously and malignantly?

T. We are not. But we need not, on that account, feel any difficulty about the spirit in which discussions and controversies for the propagation and maintenance and defence of sacred truths ought to be conducted. While it behoves everybody to seek and to worship truth devoutly, it also behoves us to guard ourselves against illusions in regard to truth, by placing no impediments or discouragements in the way of those who would warn us of our misapprehensions. Our opponents, it is true, may be in error themselves, but the mortification of wounded self-love may also prevent our seeing how thoroughly our errors have been exposed and our arguments refuted by others.

Besides, an ingenious attack upon "truth" is a warning to teachers that they have been unsuccessful as teachers. An ingenious exposure of what is false in the guise of truth, implies detection of the "false"; but an ingenious attack upon truth itself can only mean detection of the ignorance of those who have been left by their teachers imperfectly instructed, and thus exposed to the mis-teaching of others. The cure for this—the means for its discontinuance, must be sought for, not in outcries against the malignity of others, but in self-re-

proaches followed up by the correction of former short-comings in teachers.

Sympathy with those who concur in our tastes, sentiments, and convictions, is inevitable. Attraction towards them may mean repulsion from others. The knowledge of this tendency in our nature should act as a caution, with all lovers of truth, to be slow in assuming that their opponents are mistaken, because they do not at once see the force of the objections which they are urging, or of the arguments with which the objections are enforced. The discovery and adoption of new truths, the correction of errors and illusions, and the progressive improvement of conduct will, it appears to us, be best promoted by dealing in this spirit with all who are attempting to introduce us to new truths, or new forms of truths, and to expose our illusions, or what are illusions only in their eyes, supposing them to be mistaken.

P. It would not be right to close our examination of the subject of theologicoo-morality, as contrasted with true morality, omitting to acknowledge the existence of a class, not a large one certainly, of theologians who differ greatly from those theologians whose morality we have been discussing, and to whom, accordingly, any censure which others may deserve does not necessarily apply. They admit that morality, or the science and art of conduct, is quite distinct from and independent of theology. So far as they study and expound morality as a system of rules of conduct adapted to promote the welfare of mankind, they will be free from reproach. They deserve our gratitude as moral teachers, and are entitled to our respect as theologians.

Theologicoo-morality proper is the province of those other theologians, unfortunately the larger number, who through a long course of years have held that all knowledge, and particularly the knowledge of what constitutes virtue and vice, good and bad, right and wrong, in the conduct of man to man, is deducible from the Bible—not from the Bible as a repertory of knowledge, a mine of inexhaustible proofs of God's goodness,

to be explored and examined from age to age with the aid of new lights and new resources—but from the Bible as represented in some catalogues of books for sale, “in its original monastic boards, uncut,” or, where cut, disfigured, brutalized, besmeared, and misinterpreted by themselves, and their still more barbarous predecessors. As if it were not enough that each step in science, each improvement in legislation, each refinement in manners and sentiment, must be a triumph of knowledge over ignorance, after severe and protracted struggles; the ignorance and barbarism which knowledge had to vanquish were abetted by theologians, who threw over them the shield of that religion of which they were supposed to be the exponents and guardians.

It is this class of theologians alone which we have to combat. It is their immorality which we have to distinguish from morality as theologic-morality. Connivance at child-neglect, tolerance of bad conduct, and intolerance of freedom of thought and expression must be put a stop to, clamour they ever so vehemently to be the interpreters of God’s will, and threaten us as they may with God’s vengeance. To vindicate the ways of God to man is beyond their capacity. Be ours the care to preserve our minds, and the minds of all under our tutelage, from the pollution of mistaking their ways for the fruits of studying His ways—the clouds and darkness of theology and its immorality, for the sunshine and light of science and its morality.

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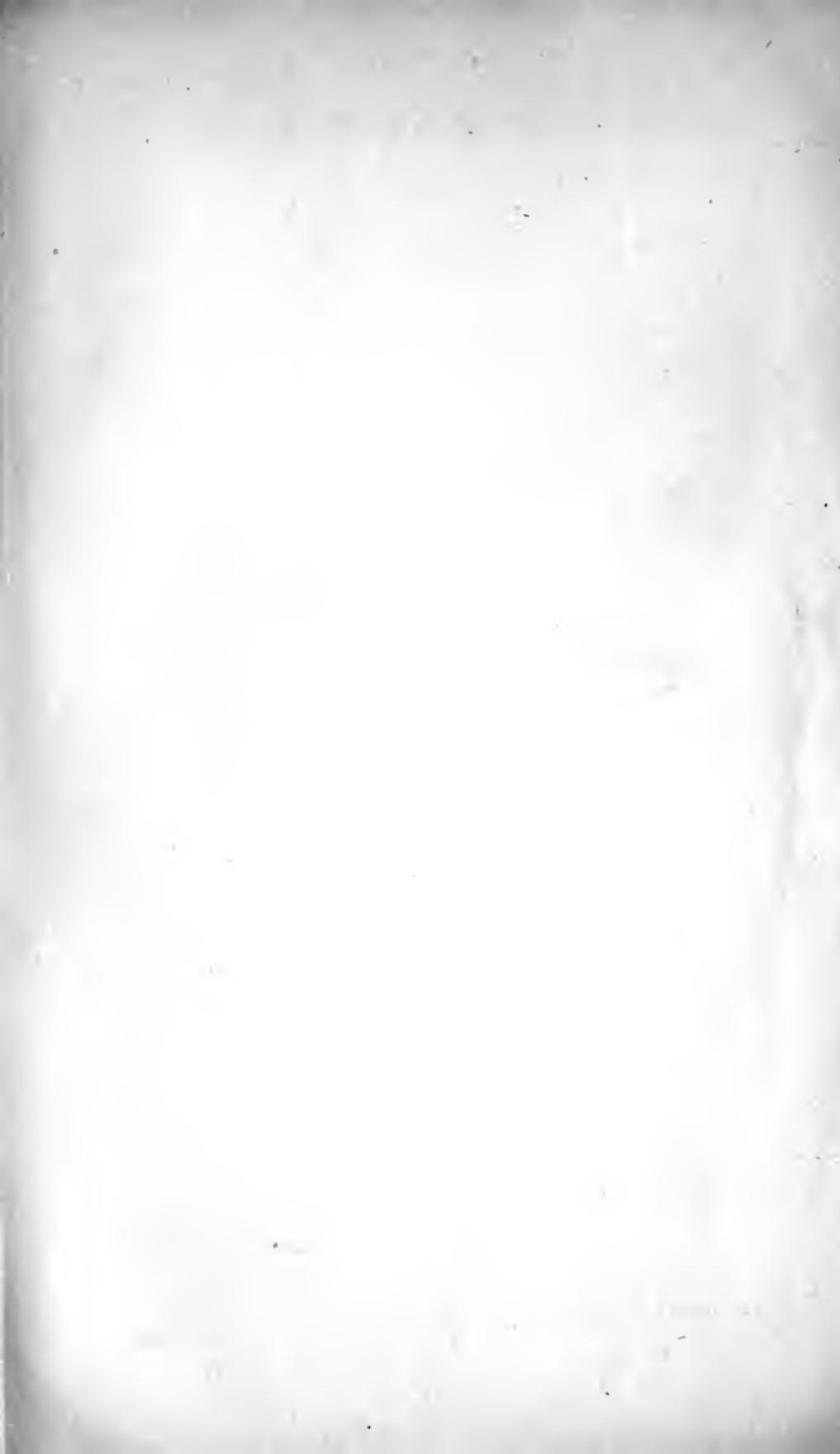
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